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Commentary
Volume Sixty-four, Number One, July 1977

# Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight & Win a Nuclear War

Richard Pipes

CARTER AND ISRAEL Steven L. Spiegel

HENRY ADAMS AT NUREMBERG Steven Schnur

THE REAL T. E. LAWRENCE Elie Kedourie

MUSIC: Samuel Lipman on Yehudi Menuhin

FICTION: John Romano on Joan Didion
Daphne Merkin on Robert Kotlowitz

BOOKS: Hilton Kramer on Diana Trilling
Joseph Epstein/Peter H. Schuck/Hyam Maccoby

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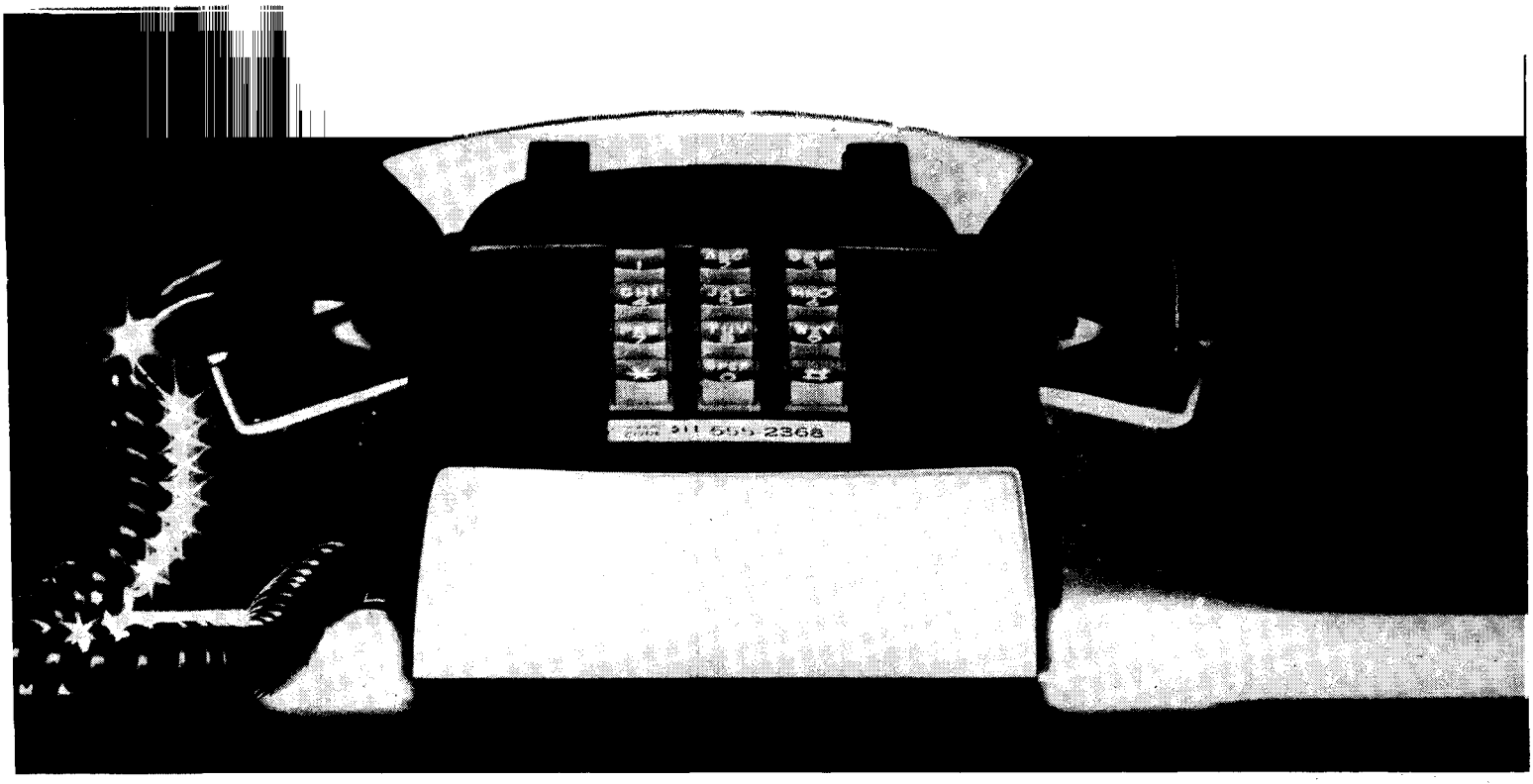

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# Commentary

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COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.00, $20 a year; 3 years $54; 5 years $80—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.


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Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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# Letters from Readers

## The Third World

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

P. T. Bauer and B. S. Yamey's article, "Against the New Economic Order" [April], states: "The declaration on the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) . . . is . . . the latest stage in the advocacy of large-scale aid from the West to the less-developed world. What is new is the more explicit link between the alleged responsibility of the West for the poverty of the less-developed world and the *duty* of the West to 'correct inequalities and address existing injustices.' "

This formulation of what the NIEO is about lays stress on the call by a minority of Third World advocates for retribution against the West and ignores . . . the position of a vast majority of thinkers, not only in the West but in the Third World. . . .

In the first instance, nowhere in the documents of the NIEO declarations, which were adopted at the Sixth and Seventh Special Sessions of the UN General Assembly, or in the 1976 Declaration of Manila, which is a refinement of Third World positions, is there a statement that indicates that the "West" has the duty to correct inequalities. . . . The documents of the Sixth and Seventh Sessions make no specific complaints against the West, that is the former colonial powers, but address all developed countries, Communist and non-Communist, and even richer Third World nations, to help "make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and developing countries." . . .

Thus the NIEO is not a call for retributive justice against the West, but is applied against OPEC, against Communist industrialized states, and against relatively rich developing countries, without prejudice. . . .

Messrs. Bauer and Yamey, when not defending the benefits of colonialism, state that the idea of a wide and widening gap in incomes between developed and developing countries is "misleading." They do not say it is false, but misleading. What their argument amounts to is that the widening-gap concept is imprecise, and in this sense is misleading. They are right that the Third World should not be lumped all together. There are poor Third World nations, transitional Third World nations, and richer Third World nations. . . .

Nevertheless, there is one fact that is indisputable: 30 per cent of the world's real production occurs among 70 per cent of the real population—yet, whether one measures per-capita food consumption, relevant utility consumption, housing consumption, education consumption, etc., the Third World receives less, and any quibbling about whether the per-capita income figures measured at current exchange rates are accurate, or where the "line" should be drawn, is beside the point. . . . Gamani Corea, Secretary General of UNCTAD [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development], expressed the dilemma in this way: "Real income per capita has grown by $2,000 since 1952 in the developed countries, while only by $120 in the poor nations." . . .

It is interesting as well that Messrs. Bauer and Yamey quote W. A. Lewis on the wealth of a village in Thailand, the one Southeast Asian nation which was never a colony, and which is, therefore, the richest nation in Southeast Asia.

But what, then, is the NIEO all about? Having argued that it is not retributive in nature, how do we explain it? The NIEO is designed to create a system of institutions on a world scale that recognizes both the needs of the developed and of the developing countries. It is a response, one response, to the breakdown in the Bretton Woods system, which collapsed in August 1971. The breakdown occurred when the U.S. closed the gold windows and put in an import surcharge. Both moves undermined two aspects of the system of trade: the financial, and the rules of gradually freer trade. Since 1971, we have had floating currencies, repeated calls for protectionism, and the oil crisis, all of which have threatened to disturb the economic system catastrophically, and to reincarnate the specter of economic nationalism.

The NIEO was designed to restore order in the economic system. And indeed, the call for the NIEO, first enunciated by Raul Prebisch in Geneva in 1964 in his maiden speech as Secretary General of UNCTAD, has been echoed in the West. In 1973, David Rockefeller



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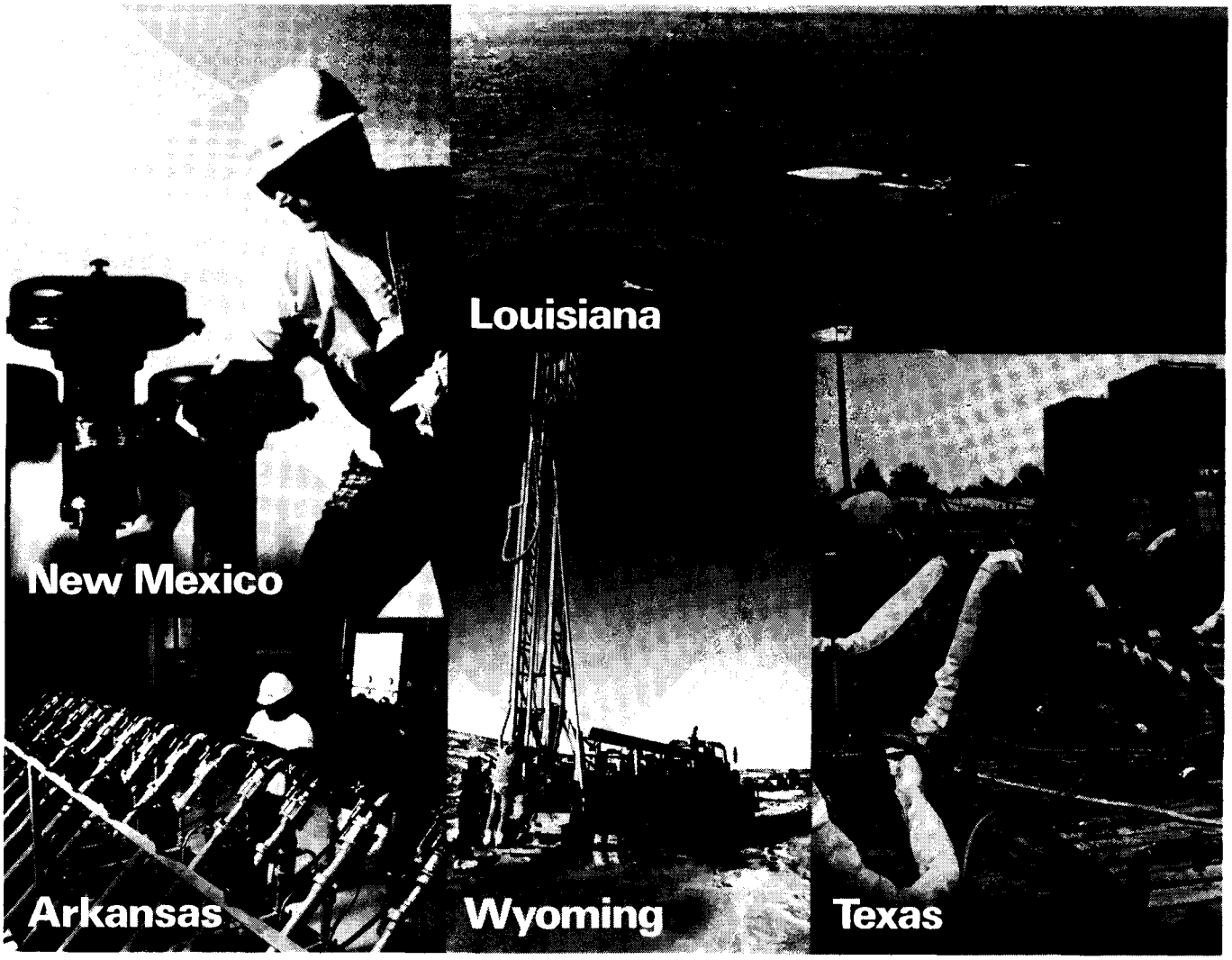


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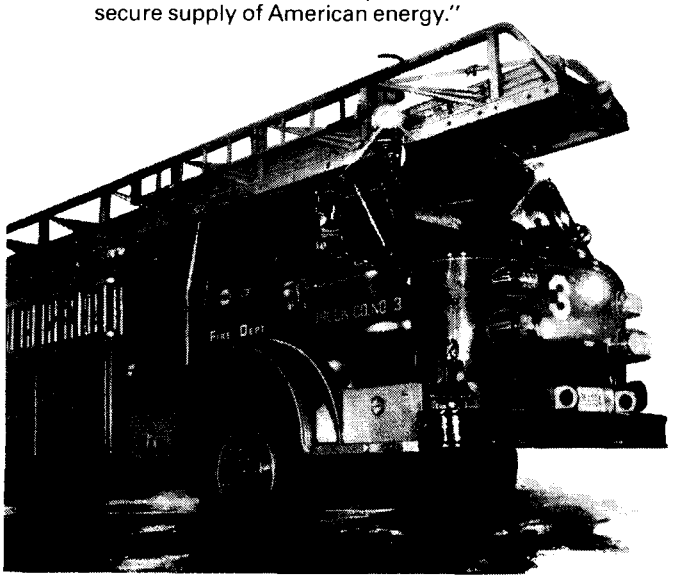

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*Essays*

"A Touching Compulsion: Wordsworth and the Problem of Literary Representation" by Geoffrey Hartman

"The Interpreter's Self: Peirce on the Cartesian 'Subject'" by Walter Benn Michaels

"Uriel's Cloud: Emerson's Rhetoric" by Barbara Packer

"Soundings for Home: Frost's Poetry of Extravagance and Return" by Richard Poirier

"Style and Sacrament in Modernist Writing" by Herbert N. Schneidau

"Vibratory Organism: Seeing Nature Whole" by Roger Shattuck

"Hemingway's Uncanny Beginnings" by David M. Wyatt

*Non-Fiction*

"I Wonder What Mr. Santini Dreamed" by Eleanor Clark

*Poetry* by Alfred Corn, Philip Dacey, Daniel Halpern, John Hollander, Richard Howard, Cynthia Macdonald, Vassar Miller, W. D. Snodgrass, and Lewis Turco

*Photo Essay* by Barbara McKenzie

*Reviews* by Alfred Corn, Frances Ferguson, John Dixon Hunt, Charles Molesworth, Guy Owen, Ronald Paulson, and Ann Wordsworth

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formed the Trilateral Commission with the explicit goal of renovating the economic system. . . . The Trilateral plan calls for change in exactly the same areas in which the Third World calls for change, and even recognizes that Third World needs must be acknowledged.

What makes the Trilateral plan . . . so crucial is that Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, Cyrus Vance, Michael Blumenthal, Harold Brown, Paul Warnke, Richard Cooper, Robert Solomon, and Zbigniew Brzezinski are all members—and they all believe in the need for a new order, not because of any concern about the colonial past, but because of the present breakdown in the patterns and structure of world trade. . . .

JEREMIAH NOVAK
State College, Pennsylvania

P.T. BAUER and B.S. YAMEY write:

Of course Jeremiah Novak is correct in saying that "nowhere in the documents of the NIEO . . . is there a statement that indicates that the 'West' has the duty to correct inequalities," if he means that there is no statement in such explicit terms. Documents, especially those prepared for international assemblies, are rarely so blunt. They have to be read in conjunction with surrounding discussions and in the light of prevailing views. We therefore quoted from an address by Julius K. Nyerere, who can hardly be dismissed as representing a minority view. We may also refer readers to the various quotations of Third World views in Daniel P. Moynihan's article, "The United States in Opposition" (COMMENTARY, March 1975). And Professor Martin Bronfenbrenner has this to say: "What seems to have developed is a collection of self-serving LDC theories of international economic relations, summarized under the glittering head of 'A New International Economic Order.' Of this collection, and the accompanying anti-capitalist and anti-market splenetics, UNCTAD (in concert with other LDC-dominated UN agencies) has become the leading world spokesman" ("Predatory Poverty on the Offensive: The UNCTAD Record," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, July 1976). It is disingenuous to suppose, as Mr. Novak seems to do, that the references in the NIEO preamble to the "existing injustices" which have to be redressed and the "inequalities" which have to be corrected are directed as much at the Soviet bloc and the richer Third World countries as at the West.

Further, the declaration itself is less general in its implied attribution of responsibility than Mr. Novak suggests. The preamble asserts that "the remaining vestiges of alien and colonial domination . . . and neo-colonialism in all its forms continue to be among the greatest obstacles to the . . . progress of the developing countries. . . ." And while one section of the "program of action" deals with "regulation and control over the activities of transnational corporations," there is no mention of the activities and practices of the state-trading monopolies of the Communist countries.

On the wide and widening gap, Mr. Novak accuses us of quibbling, accepts one of our points, ignores the rest, and gives two sets of figures which are subject to all the shortcomings to which we draw attention. Not surprisingly, therefore, he misses our main points. We do not dispute the self-evident fact that rich countries are richer than poor countries. We show, among other things, that the usual income comparisons are shot through with inadequacies. We cited Professor Usher's (not Lewis's) study as an example of the impact of the errors and biases which deprive the usual statistical comparisons of any sound basis. Or does it not matter to Mr. Novak what the figures mean or whether they are misleading? We may note, further, that whatever the "real" facts of the size of the income differences may be, they do not explain why the differences exist. On this Mr. Novak says nothing, although we give some attention to it in our article. Again, the omission is not surprising, especially since Mr. Novak says of our article that when we are not defending the benefits of colonialism, we are stating that the idea of the gap is misleading—which is a somewhat misleading, if not precisely a false, summary of what is in our article.

Mr. Novak refers to our quotations from Usher's study of Thailand (not "a village in Thailand"), and says that Thailand is the "one Southeast Asian nation which was never a colony, and which is, therefore, the richest nation in Southeast Asia." The "therefore" is more revealing of Mr. Novak's thinking than of the operation of economic

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processes. In any case, according to the available national-income statistics (of which Mr. Novak seems to approve), as well as other evidence, Thailand is not the richest country in the region. Thailand's neighbor, Malaysia, formerly a colony, is much richer, with gross national (and domestic) product per head well over twice as high. It was already much richer than Thailand when still a colony. Income per head is much higher in Hong Kong, still a colony, than in either Thailand or Malaysia. The relevant statistics are readily available. Further, our article is not concerned with the "benefits of colonialism." In the relevant parts it considers the effects of economic contacts between Third World countries and the West. Thailand, like Malaysia, has maintained and fostered contacts with the West, unlike, say, Ceylon and Burma, which have lagged behind in economic performance. (See H. Myint, *Economic Theory and the Underdeveloped Countries,* London, 1971.) The same phenomenon is observable in Africa: compare the Ivory Coast and Guinea, or Kenya and Tanzania.

According to Mr. Novak, the NIEO is a "response . . . to the breakdown in the Bretton Woods system which collapsed in 1971." It is "designed to restore order in the economic system." In fact, most of the "principles" in the NIEO declaration as well as most of the detailed "program of action" in it would be as relevant or irrelevant, as desirable or undesirable, and as warranted or unwarranted, if the "collapse" had not occurred at all. The NIEO is about other things, notably the intergovernmental transfer of wealth to the Third World, to be effected by a variety of methods and devices. This explains, perhaps, why Raoul Prebisch of UNCTAD could have "first enunciated" (according to Mr. Novak) "the call for the NIEO" as early as 1964. Indeed, the contents of the Prebisch report and UNCTAD publications of 1964 are remarkably similar to those of the NIEO declaration of 1974.

## Art & Politics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Samuel Lipman's "uneasiness" concerning the release on BASF of nearly one hundred recordings made by the German radio during the Nazi dictatorship ["German Wartime Broadcasts," Music, March] is easily understood and readily shared. That the performances themselves are of great musical and historical interest must not be allowed to obscure the fact that these recordings were not made merely against the backdrop of the Nazi dictatorship, but were in fact important threads in the fabric of that monstrous regime.

As William L. Shirer has accurately observed (as a correspondent in Berlin), musical life in Nazi Germany was one of immense richness and variety, with performances of the very highest quality becoming almost routine occurrences. When one considers the fact that this same musical life—the one documented by these BASF recordings—was in reality part of a highly efficient national propaganda machine aimed at distracting the German people from the terrifying evils which were taking place concurrently with these performances, one's pleasure in listening to them might well be replaced by "uneasiness."

I can only hope, as does Mr. Lipman, that the musical excellence of these records will not obscure their origins as "bread-and-circuses" distractions for a people under the crushing weight of a morally perverse totalitarian regime.

John Crabtree

Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

Thank you for publishing "German Wartime Broadcasts." I can now hurry to the nearest record store and buy the collection put out by the Badische Anilin-und Sodafabriken (BASF for short). What exquisite pleasures are in store for me! I will be able to listen to a ". . . unique musical statement . . . the greatest recorded voices of the century . . . the beautiful sounds captured here. . . ." Let the ignoramuses wallow in the performances of the rest of the world. We, the true aesthetes, are always ". . . careful to protect art from political judgments . . ." and can truly appreciate the graceful products of Hitler Germany.

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SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

The heavy irony of Alfred Hornik's letter ought not to swamp by its crudity the very real problem of the possibility and desirability of separating artistic and political judgments. I not only understand but also share the inevitable feelings of revulsion with which one approaches any manifestation of the Nazi era. But whether or not in any individual case the matter can be faced, it still remains true that artistic phenomena, both in their origin and in their effect, have an independent existence. A refusal to recognize this would result in easily apparent perversions of artistic decisions.

Such might well be the case, for example, with the vast body of Russian music, from its awakenings in the mid-19th century to its bloated present. Before 1917, Russian music, both in composition and in performance, was the pampered product of a state system built upon the suppression of workers, peasants, Jews, Poles, etc. After the October revolution, the master changed; but music remained as before an integral part of the state apparatus, a pacifier of the masses at home and a publicist for Soviet power abroad. The very same Stalin who sent untold millions to death, in many cases personally directed the patronage given Soviet musicians. Are we then not to perform Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, Prokofiev and Shostakovich? Are we to execrate the memory of Anton Rubinstein and Chaliapin, to refuse to hear the records of Oistrakh and Richter?

Surely the solution is not to draw artistic consequences from political judgments; rather, we must, by a judicious separation of art and politics, not only protect art from alien domination but, at least as important, refuse to allow artistic excellence to sanctify an otherwise loathsome politics. The purpose of my article on the German wartime broadcasts was thus twofold: to recognize musical distinction and at the same time, by placing that distinction in its political, social, and moral context, to warn against our forgetting the climate in which it thrived.

It will come as no surprise that I am in agreement with John Crabtree's letter, which seems to me to contain an admirable attempt at such a balanced consideration. I would only add by way of amplification that the remarkable musical life of Germany in this period was not a result of Nazi government or party policy (except insofar as music was permitted to thrive) but rather a preexisting pattern of German cultural life which the Nazis employed for their own malign purposes.

## The Bakke Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

John H. Bunzel, in his excellent analysis of the *Bakke* case ["Bakke vs. University of California," March], . . . writes that "Good young minds must be rescued before they become dulled and ill-equipped to go on to college." But if the Supreme Court upholds the reasoning of the University of California at Davis, all our minds may become dulled in the following ways.

1. We will be afraid to patronize a "minority" doctor for fear that he has not the ability of his non-"minority" colleague. "Minority" doctors who were able to meet the standards of the majority will thus suffer. This may discourage qualified "minority" students from pursuing careers in medicine.

2. Young people will learn that study and achievement take on less importance than one's ethnic and racial background. (It is presently easier to get into and finance your university education in New York City if you perform in a mediocre fashion in secondary school.)

3. The term "equality of opportunity" will lose all its meaning, and thus, that which has made this country unique . . . will disappear.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The city of Detroit is approximately half black. Because of deliberate policy for many years there were almost no black police officers hired. If the California Supreme Court decision in the *Bakke* case were applied to the promotional policies of the Board of Police Commissioners, we would surely find ourselves with an almost all-white command structure, a situation which would impose enormous strains on the community. What is good social policy ought to be good law.

AVERN COHN
Detroit Board of Police Commissioners
Detroit, Michigan

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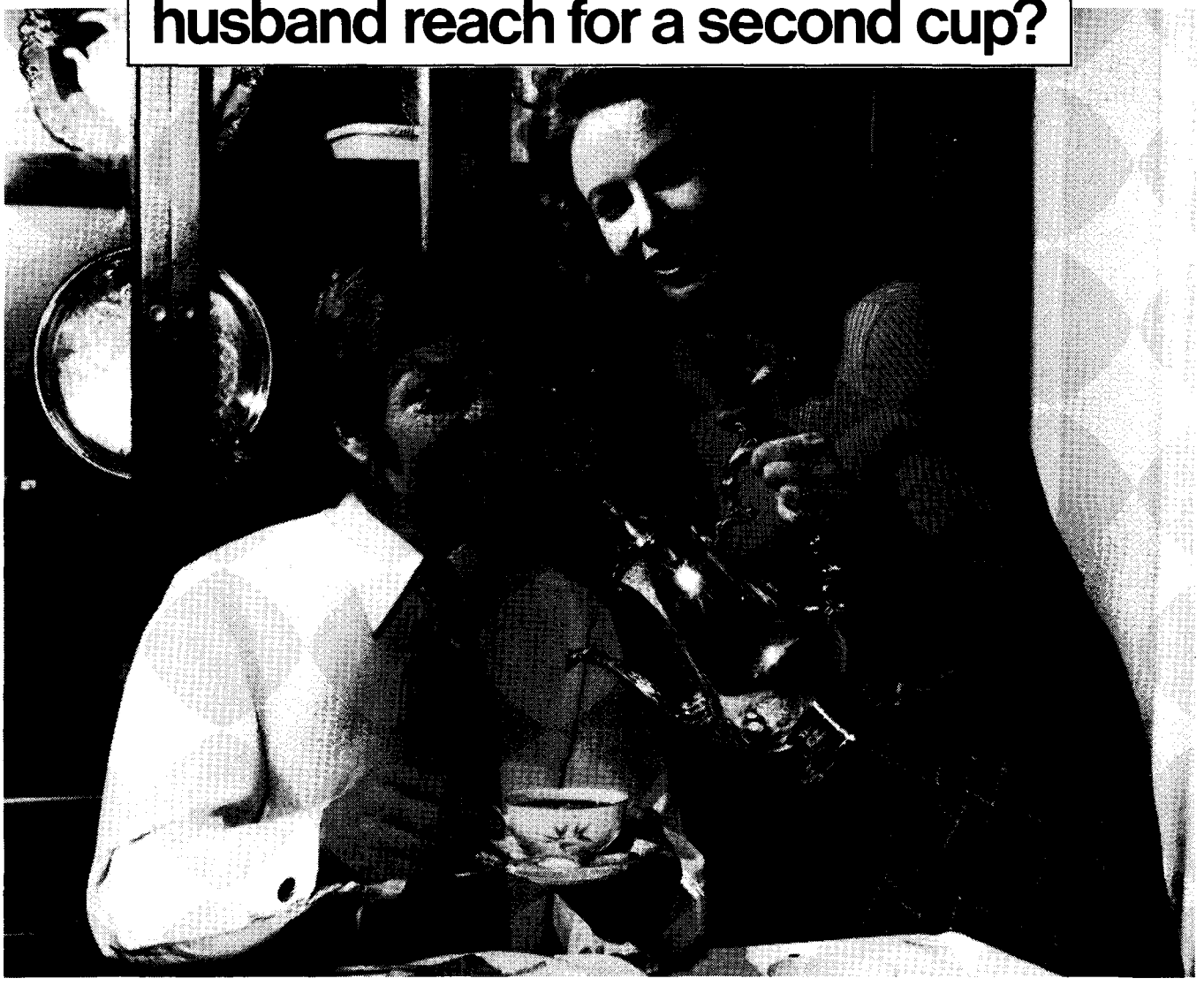
# Wouldn't you like to see your husband reach for a second cup?



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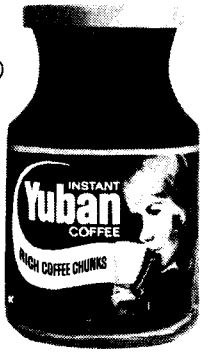


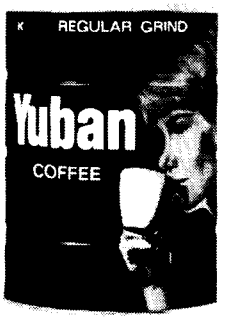


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To the Editor of Commentary:

John H. Bunzel's discussion of the philosophical questions raised by the *Bakke* case, though perceptive, slides over two points . . . which, together, support the minority view in the California Supreme Court decision.

The first is the problem of group rights versus individual rights, a discussion which Mr. Bunzel sums up with the statement: "The attempt to do away with discrimination against some groups by creating disadvantage for [other groups] should be regarded as illegal and unjust." The argument is unexceptionable, but relevant only to a discussion of group rights versus group rights. . . . It cannot be argued that disadvantage has been created for Allan Bakke's group—middle-class whites—because Mr. Bakke has not been admitted to the University of California's medical school at Davis or because not more than 84 per cent of that school will be represented by his group. Disadvantage has indeed been created for the individual, Mr. Bakke, and his rights do run counter to those of the minority groups which the University of California is trying to serve. But in weighing questions of individual rights versus public or group rights, two considerations obtain: the number of people directly helped versus the number directly hurt by the decision, and the quality of the principle fostered or undermined by the decision. In the case of obscenity rulings, for example, a few people are hurt by totally free publication rights, but probably still fewer are really helped by a total lack of restriction. The principle of a free press is the only important winner in a decision which places no restrictions on publication.

In the *Bakke* case, the numbers are in favor of the University of California admissions policy. That the black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican communities need more physicians, particularly those who belong to their own groups, is evident. . . . Mr. Bakke and fifteen other potential white doctors are not statistically significant for their group when their claims are measured against the magnitude of need in the communities of the larger minorities.

The second point which I believe Mr. Bunzel deals with inadequately concerns the principle of equality of opportunity versus

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equality of condition. . . . The question is whether equality of condition, or results, should also be secured as a right for those groups which are disadvantaged. It is clear that equality of condition cannot be secured justly by awarding special privilege, but Mr. Bunzel and the California court apparently consider medical school a "condition," a result, an end in itself. It simply is not: neither is law school. They are means toward an end. No one ever enjoyed the privileges of . . . special condition by failing to complete professional school or to pass the qualifying examinations. By opening sixteen places to minority-group students, the university is balancing the equality of opportunity, not the equality of condition, for it has been made all too clear that equal access—to medical school, for example—cannot be assured when different groups are standing on (educational) stools of differing heights. . . .

Room must be made at all levels of the educational structure for those who have been handicapped by poor instruction at lower levels. At the same time, no position or license can be awarded to a person who does not pass the minimum qualifications for competency in any field without jeopardizing the quality of service, the principle of achievement by merit, and, in medicine, physical safety and health. The lowering of the passing grades of the state bar exam in Pennsylvania is a bad precedent. Everybody loses. The implied contract of entrance to a professional school should be clear: the opportunity is here, but the result will be of one's own making. . . .

STEPHEN PHELPS
Albany, New York

JOHN H. BUNZEL writes:

Frederic Wile raises a delicate problem, one which I hope does not become widespread. I have heard stories about people who keep private lists of so-called minority doctors in their communities because, it is assumed, they have not met the majority standards and therefore should be avoided. I hope these stories are false. I also hope there will never be a good reason for them to be anything else but false. But I have talked to women and individuals of different minority backgrounds who worry about being unjustly categorized in just this way. They do not want their reputations compromised by condescending talk of special treatment or favor. What they want most is to be accepted and respected as doctors or lawyers or teachers—period.

A serious problem with affirmative action can arise if and when women or minority-group members are appointed, say, to a college faculty and are then labeled or regarded by their colleagues and students as "affirmative-action appointments." They do not want or need this kind of identification or stigma. They would like to believe they were appointed on their individual merits and accomplishments and not because they are black or brown or female. That, incidentally, is what genuine equality of opportunity is all about.

Avern Cohn does not understand the California Supreme Court decision in the *Bakke* case if he believes it would produce only all-white law schools or, by extension, all-white police departments. The Court ruled that an admissions program should aim at enrolling disadvantaged students from all walks of life and that race should not be the only or decisive factor in determining who among the disadvantaged should be admitted. I doubt that this reading of the Constitution by the California Supreme Court would, as he says, "impose enormous strains on the community."

Stephen Phelps, it would appear, wants to settle these thorny questions by "the numbers." I have always had difficulty with the idea that one could or should apply the statistician's method of computation to determine what is right or wrong, just or unjust, or (in this instance) constitutional or unconstitutional. Mr. Phelps says that the disadvantage suffered by Mr. Bakke and other potential white doctors is "not statistically significant for their group." (That, I gather, takes care of Mr. Bakke's rights.) He wants to calculate "the number of people directly helped versus the number directly hurt." But such neat and tidy cost-accounting measures would, I am afraid, simply create new kinds of injustice by adopting some notion of "group theory" which, in practice, would lead to the application of group and ascriptive considerations in the evaluation of individuals.

Mr. Phelps might argue that it would lead to increased efficiency. Perhaps. But I do not think it would compensate for the unfairness to individuals. Further, as my

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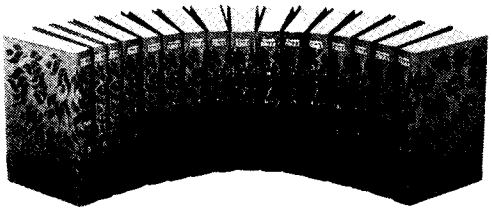

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colleague Robert L. Simon of Hamilton College points out, a pragmatic appeal to statistical generalizations can cut both ways—that is, "if it can justify preferential discrimination in favor of women and black persons, then, given corresponding gains in efficiency, it can justify discrimination against those groups as well." I should also point out that arguments based on statistical generalizations do not address the more difficult and critical question of what is morally acceptable and unacceptable in a society such as ours that is deeply committed to individual rights and responsibilities.

Mr. Phelps is right in suggesting that the current debate over equality has to do with the inherent contradiction between an emphasis on opportunity and an emphasis on results. We could argue over whether a medical or law school is a means to an end or an end in itself. The fact is it is both. I have rarely found that means and ends can be easily separated.

Where Mr. Phelps and I differ is in our respective answers to this basic question: is a positive race-conscious admissions policy based on minority-group membership the most effective and democratic way to bring about equal opportunity for certain minorities without violating the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection of the laws to all persons? His answer is yes—and his arguments are thoughtful and deserve careful consideration. My answer is no. I do not believe we can achieve either equality or justice for everyone by urging the government (or an agent of the government, such as a university) to adopt a preferential policy based solely on race. I am troubled by the notion that the government can encourage and practice discrimination in order to get rid of discrimination.


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## Jews & Revolution

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his stimulating review of my book, *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky* [Books in Review, April], Hyam Maccoby has raised two important points which deserve an answer. First, he appears to regard the hypothesis of Jewish self-hatred as applied to some revolutionary Jews as being "rather hazy," though elsewhere he accepts my evidence that they actively repudiated their Jewish identity and were even influenced by traditional anti-Semitism. My point was that many Jewish Marxists echoed the negative prejudices of the dominant Christian majority with regard to Jews; that they internalized these prejudices and even suffered from a kind of "ethnic death wish," namely, that the Jewish collectivity should disappear as rapidly as possible. Their scorn for Judaism and for the defense of legitimate Jewish interests and rights, and their identification of Jews with the worst features of capitalism, appear to me a regrettable manifestation of self-hatred. But I do not assert that this was the primary reason for their involvement in the socialist movement, though I think that in the past insufficient attention was paid to this desire to negate one's background as a motivating factor in Jewish radicalism.

Mr. Maccoby's second criticism is, I think, more substantial.

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Should one not consider the revolutionism of Marx and his disciples as a *positive* manifestation of Jewish messianism and of the traditional Jewish passion for unity? Here, I am afraid, my heart is with Mr. Maccoby but not my head. If Jewish and Marxian universalism were really congruent, then it is hard to see why so many Jews, and virtually all Communists, reject the parallel. In spite of Mr. Maccoby's assertion and that of various theologians, philosophers, and historians (including Berdyaev, Bertrand Russell, and Arnold Toynbee), I remain an agnostic concerning the alleged affinity of Judaism and Marxism. Unless one accepts the validity of notions like the collective unconscious, or else believes that there is an identifiable and inherited Jewish pattern of mind, this hypothesis seems difficult to substantiate. Moreover, on the level of historical relevance, I would question its value as far as the topic of my book is concerned.

It seems to me that the preconceptions underlying the attitudes of revolutionary Jews to the Jewish problem definitely belong to the modern, post-Enlightenment era, even if echoes of older Christian stereotypes still play a role. For the secular Marxist revolutionary, Judaism is not primarily a religion, let alone a distinctive culture or the nucleus of a national entity, but a peripheral (and negative) feature of bourgeois society, doomed to disappear with it. True, some individuals like Moses Hess, Aron Lieberman, and Bernard Lazare did search for a secular messianic synthesis of Judaism and socialism, and this eventually led to the emergence of socialist Zionism. In the case of Lazare (and possibly of revolutionaries like Hess or Gustav Landauer), there were identifiable elements of ancient Hebrew prophetism, as I suggest in my book. But unfortunately, they had little influence on the development of international socialism.

On the other hand, the "non-Jewish" Marxist Jews who were intensely antagonistic to Jewish tradition (including its messianism) turned out to be a powerful force in modern history. From the standpoint of Judaism, however, they were a tragic aberration, striking as their analyses of society and politics in general may have been. Isaac Deutscher claimed that they had "transcended" Judaism, by which he meant the ghetto environment


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rather than a specific religious world view. My position is that one cannot transcend something which one does not know. It is this ignorance of the Jewish tradition, so evident in the careers of the great Jewish revolutionaries, that makes me skeptical of attempts to see in them a positive modern manifestation of "Judaism." A radicalism predicated on the desirability of dissolving Jewish group identity scarcely seems equipped to point the way to Jewish survival in the contemporary world. I am sure that Hyam Maccoby would agree with me on this.

ROBERT S. WISTRICH
London, England

HYAM MACCOBY writes:

I did not deny the existence of Jewish self-hatred in revolutionary Jews, but thought there was some haziness in Robert S. Wistrich's analysis of this phenomenon and of its consequences. I argued that this self-hatred did not amount to full anti-Semitism (lacking the paranoid element), and that as a factor in the origins of Jewish revolutionary universalism, it was far less important than the positive factor of the universalist messianism of the Jewish religious tradition. Mr. Wistrich points out that he does not regard "Jewish self-hatred" as the primary reason for involvement of Jews in the socialist movement; but he does apparently regard it as the chief *Jewish-derived* reason, and I would deny this.

Why should so many Jews, afflicted by self-hatred, join a universalist intellectual movement rather than fade quietly into the background by assimilation into various innocuous professions? Were they not seeking a *substitute* for the Judaism they had rejected—a substitute that would provide the intellectual orientation and stimulation, and the universalist idealism, previously provided by Judaism? True, the revolutionaries took their slogans from the contemporary thought patterns of the Enlightenment; but why the need to be idealistic intellectuals and world-improvers in numbers immensely higher, in proportion, than those of their non-Jewish compatriots? There is no need to postulate a collective unconscious or an "inherited Jewish pattern of mind" in a biological sense. All one needs to postulate is that Jews, like other people, are the product of their previous cultural history, which they cannot obliterate at one blow even if they should want to. Mr. Wistrich, by insisting on *conscious* identification and "knowledge" as the criteria of cultural influence, overlooks the myriad subtle ways in which cultural attitudes are handed on, even unintentionally.

Bertrand Russell once said that there is a great difference between a Catholic atheist and a Protestant atheist. There is also a Jewish atheist—i.e., one who repudiates Judaism in a distinctively Jewish way, and sometimes unconsciously stands for certain Jewish values in a purer way than conventional believers. I am not, of course, saying that the survival of Judaism lies in the hands of the Jewish atheists, but those concerned about the survival of Judaism would do well not to adopt merely negative attitudes toward the Jewish rebels.

## Containment

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert W. Tucker ["Beyond Détente," March] quite correctly points out that there is little evidence that Soviet hostility to the West has substantially diminished. Furthermore, as he also notes, the proposition that Soviet military power can no longer be effectively employed to serve the purpose of an expansionist foreign policy cannot survive critical examination. . . . The rapid development of Soviet naval forces with an expanding interventionary capability may be used to impede the flow of oil to Europe, and indeed the mere capability may be converted to political leverage.

Consequently, Mr. Tucker concludes that there is no escape from a policy of containment, but the "containment" he recommends is highly deceptive and virtually amounts to an emasculation of American power to resist Communist expansion, despite the lip service he pays to the Communist threat. For he supports a concept of containment limited to the "conventional requirements of balance of power" (a most ambiguous concept), to which he opposes the Truman Doctrine, with its indiscriminate commitment to intervene anywhere and everywhere against revolutionary change or to resist wars of national liberation. He asserts that the Truman Doctrine in effect proclaims "an interest in maintaining a stable world order—presided over by American power—that would insure the triumph of liberal-capitalist values and institutions." He argues that in substantial measure the doctrine accounts for Vietnam; therefore, containment is discredited at the "margin"; by the same logic, intervention by the U.S. to prevent expansion of Communism in Angola, Mozambique, Korea, Southeast Asia, or the Middle East would fall outside the scope of Mr. Tucker's concept of necessary containment. . . .

On March 12, 1947, President Truman went before a joint session of Congress and stated: "I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure. . . . I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way." Mr. Tucker cynically believes that Truman's real intention was to "insure the triumph of liberal-capitalist values," and he warns us that we will "very likely be in for a very bad time" if we attempt to deny the USSR the opportunity of "making use of its newly acquired power" to expand Soviet influence.

Even on his own interpretation of national security as a function of balance of power between states, the expansion of Soviet power into Somalia, Soviet naval stations on the east coast of Africa, the potential closing of the Straits of Malacca, a Communist-dominated Mozambique choking off the supply of critical minerals to the West from South Africa and impeding the flow of oil to Europe—all this could just as surely isolate America and shift the balance of power as could Soviet threats to Europe as such. Indeed, a direct confrontation in Europe is assiduously avoided by the Soviet Union, especially when expansion by proxy is more readily achieved through inciting and supplying aggression by North Korea and Hanoi, by the Cubans in their invasion of Angola, and by the Egyptians in their war against Israel.

DAVID S. LICHTENSTEIN
Chevy Chase, Maryland

ROBERT W. TUCKER writes:

If we put aside David S. Lichtenstein's needless polemics, excessive sensitivity, and partially mistaken characterizations, his letter is a useful reminder that it is not enough to agree on the continued need to contain Soviet power. Even if this

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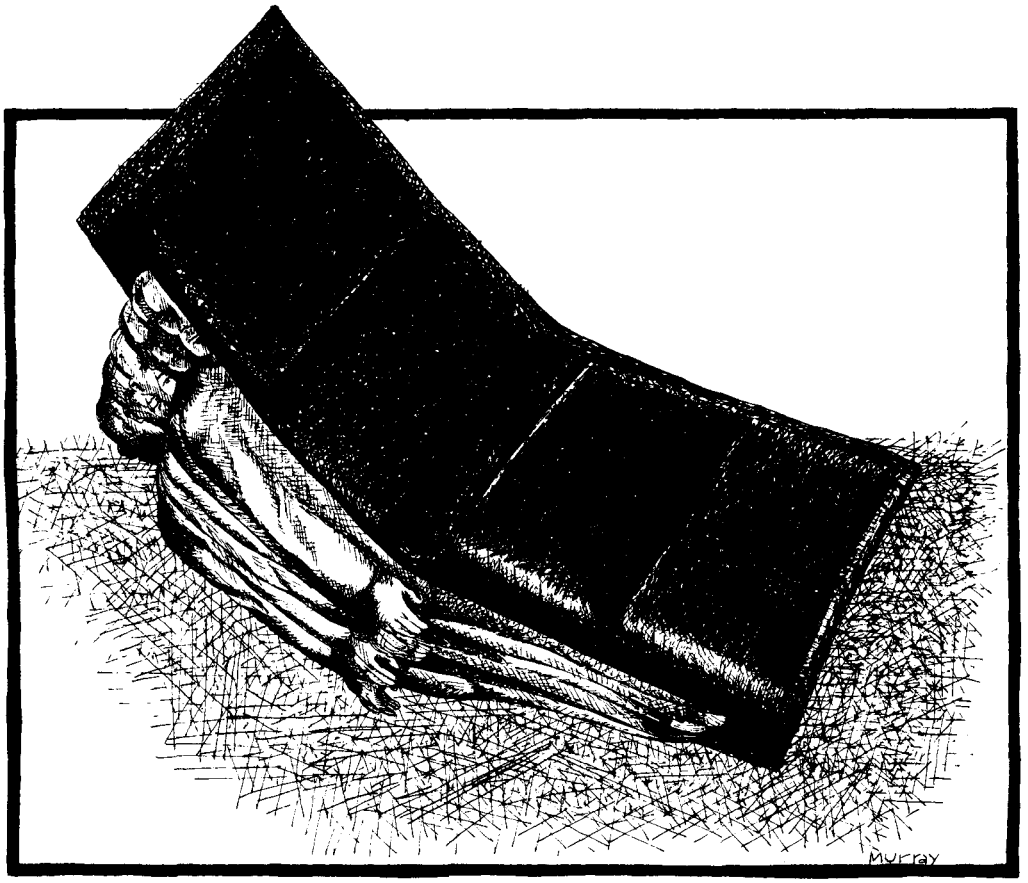


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need were generally conceded, controversy would persist over the scope and purpose of containment. Mr. Lichtenstein apparently approves of the version of containment implicit in the Truman Doctrine and, despite the changes that have occurred since the late 1940's, finds no reason to depart from this version of containment today. On the contrary, these changes—particularly the growth of Soviet power—are found by him to make the containment of the Truman Doctrine all the more necessary now and in the foreseeable future.

In reply to Mr. Lichtenstein, I can only repeat what I said in my article. The version of containment he advocates is very likely to lead to disaster, given the rough parity in arms today between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviets cannot be expected passively to sit on their arms. Having acquired them, they will be put to political use. If we are to deny their use everywhere, we must be willing and prepared to make an effort more demanding than the effort made in the years of the classic cold war. Even if such effort were desirable, which I deny, it is no more than rhetorical to ask whether there is now a willingness to make it.

It does not follow, however, that we should confine containment to Western Europe and Japan while simply abandoning the "margin." What does follow is that we will have to limit our responses on the margin, and to do so largely in terms of the anticipated effects on the center. To take the obvious example: we cannot permit Soviet actions which might impede—let alone shut off—the flow of oil to Europe. But this is very different from advocating resistance to expansion of Soviet influence wherever it threatens either because such expansion is seen as an intrinsic evil or because expansion anywhere is found to open the way to expansion everywhere. Although he does not openly say so, I can only conclude that Mr. Lichtenstein's criticism is largely based on the above propositions. If my sin in his eyes is that of having rejected them, then I must plead guilty.

## Middle East Policy

To the Editor of Commentary:

The excellent article by Eugene V. Rostow ["The American Stake in Israel," April] brings to light the submerged causes of the Arab-Israeli wars and of the confused and vacillating American policy in the Middle East. Mr. Rostow should be commended for pointing out a fact that has been generally overlooked or ignored, namely that the Arabs are at war not just with Israel, but with the Jewish people as a whole, fourteen million of them, in Israel and in the Diaspora. He further proves that the Jewish position in Palestine is rooted in international law and that the Arab claims are a flagrant violation of international covenants. . . .

As Mr. Rostow forcefully indicates, outside interest and involvement are at the core of the continuous Arab war against Israel and are responsible for the absence of peace in the area. Initially it was Great Britain which took the Arab side in the conflict . . . [but] in the 1950's Britain's role as protector of the Arabs was taken over by the Soviet Union as part of its expansionist policy.

Notwithstanding growing differences with some Arab states, the overall Soviet protective umbrella is still being maintained, and it is this which has wrecked all attempts at a Middle East peace. Furthermore, it is not only the Soviet Union which encourages Arab intransigence against Israel; the attitude of the United States also emboldens the Arabs to keep up their war policy. Certain vested interest groups in the U.S., as well as the illusory belief of State Department diplomats that Israeli compromises and retreats can bring peace to the area and woo the Arabs away from their Soviet big brother, have misguided American diplomacy throughout the years. However, as Mr. Rostow points out, British appeasement did not make the Arabs more amenable to Jewish national existence: "The Arabs were not mollified or pacified, but further inflamed by the prospect of success." But this lesson obviously continues to escape American policy-makers. . . .

The lack of awareness and perceptiveness on the part of American policy-makers in regard to the Arabs has been proved time and time again. In a twenty-minute interview with Ibn Saud, FDR thought he had learned all that he had to know about the Middle East, and the problems of the Arabs and Jews in the Holy Land. General Naguib (the front man for Nasser) in Egypt, Nuri Pasha in Iraq, King Idris in Libya, and Saud and Faisal in Saudi Arabia were looked upon by Washington as pivots of American policy in the Middle East. Yet all of them were swept away by the periodic winds blowing through the Arab world. The State Department, however, has not learned from these experiences; and is now in the process of compounding its earlier errors, as Mr. Rostow also shows in his article.

Beinesh Epstein

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

The New York *Times* of April 20, 1921 reported on its front page that Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes sought restrictive immigration legislation to prevent, in particular, from entering this country " 'Armenians, Jews, Persians, and Russians, all of which have been so driven hither and thither since 1914 that they cannot be regarded as desirable populations for any country.' " Twenty-four years later, Senator Robert A. Taft, speaking on the floor of the United States Senate, October 2, 1945, supported ". . . President Truman's action in suggesting to the British Prime Minister that 100,000 immigration certifications *to Palestine* be issued to the homeless Jews of Europe" (emphasis added). Taft termed this step as "some atonement for what we failed to do during the war, for during the war period we did little more than express a polite sympathy for the Jews in Germany and in the occupied countries." Taft's comments would suggest that while in 1945 wretched Jewish refugees might still not be deemed fit for entry to the United States, they were at least deemed desirable for one place on this planet.

In choosing to conclude his article with a reference to Dürrenmatt's terrible vision in *The Visit*, Eugene V. Rostow recognizes that part of the American "stake" stems from the moral responsibility Senator Taft articulated in 1945. That is to say, a fair part of this stake is to keep from imposing upon Israel terms that would leave to the United States, in Amos Perlmutter's phrase, "the burden of carrying Israeli refugees to safe American shores." And it is, of course, no sure thing that those Israelis who would survive a fifth Arab campaign would be welcome to the United States. The spirit of Charles Evans

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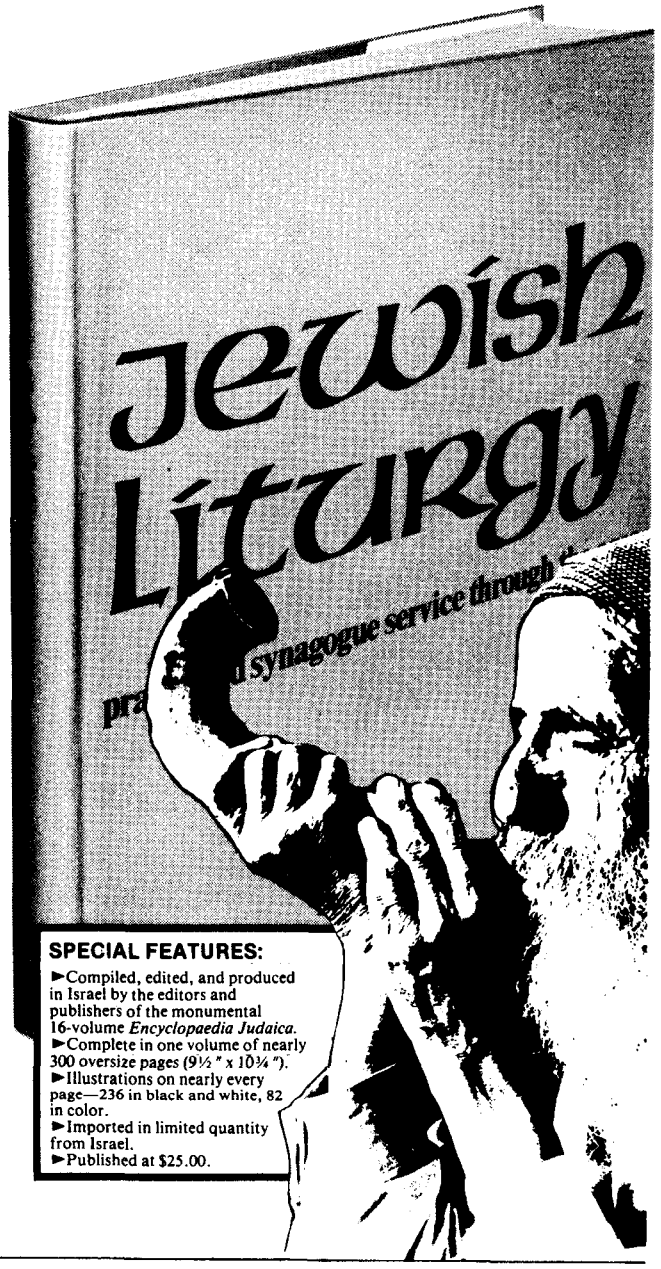


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Hughes still stalks the land insofar as immigration is concerned. . . .

Mr. Rostow does contemporary commentators on the Arab-Israeli war a service by calling attention to its initial phase, in addition to discussing the latter aspects, though what are popularly referred to as Middle East "wars" between Israel and the Arab states might more accurately be termed campaigns—one does not, after all, refer to the War of the Bulge, the War for Okinawa, or the War of Stalingrad in referring to the series of hostilities that comprise World War II. There is much valuable perspective to be derived from studying the Security Council resolutions of 1948—resolutions that institutionalized the UN's pro-Arab tilt. . . .

One wishes that Secretary of State Vance would take the time to review the record of the United States and the United Nations concerning the initial phase of the Arab-Israeli war, soon to enter its thirtieth year. Were he to do so, it would be difficult for him to separate the hostilities of 1956, 1967, and 1973 from the hostilities resulting from the Arab aggression against Israel following the proclamation of independence by the Jewish state in 1948. It would also be unlikely that he would then follow the George Ball-James Reston line of imposing a settlement on Israel that could well bring Dürrenmatt's vision down upon the Israeli survivors of a successful Arab military campaign.

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

## Britain Today

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is difficult to envisage what fate Robert Moss is actually predicting for Britain in his article, "Anglocommunism?" [February]—and even more difficult to imagine whatever it is actually coming to pass.

Mr. Moss, if I follow him correctly, seems to regard the risk of a form of Third World "communism" in Britain as a real one. It is difficult to know what to make of such a theory. Among the wide variety of political systems of the newly independent states, only a tiny minority are rooted in Marxist ideology or follow in any significant way the model of the Soviet Union and its satellites. About the only common factor I can think of which is generally (but not universally) true of these states and the Communist countries is the fashion of very low rates of income tax; but I take it that Mr. Moss is not suggesting that we in Britain are likely to follow this course.

Nor do I find the telling of the beads of the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*—an incantatory activity not conducive to serious philosophical inquiry—of much help in understanding an industrially-advanced society like Britain's. Which of our societies does not have free universal education, inheritance taxes, and a progressive income tax? These measures are not intrinsically undesirable, although there is widespread recognition in Britain (shared by the government) that the balance of indirect to direct taxation needs adjusting. Nor do the British admire some aspects of Eastern Europe for which the *Communist Manifesto* provides no guide—for instance, the suppression of individual human rights, a matter on which the British and American governments are, as usual, united.

Mr. Moss is not factually correct in implying that by comparison with other advanced-industrial (and democratic) countries Britain is overtaxed, public spending is unduly high, or that the proportion of overseas debt is excessive. Perhaps his only "statistic" which bears examination is the electoral unpopularity of the Communist party. Indeed, the main contribution of the Communists to the British political system is financial: in helping to defray the expenses of our general elections as their candidates continue to lose their deposits (£4,350 in the October 1974 election—£150 for *every one* of the 29 constituencies in which a Communist candidate stood).

The evidence over the past thirty years is that there has been an extension, not a restriction, of the principles of parliamentary democracy and the rights of citizens. Before the Crown Proceedings Act (1947), it was impossible for private citizens to sue the government. Before the Representation of the People Act (1949), a minority of privileged citizens had more than one vote. Before 1967, when the office of Parliamentary Commissioner was established, there was no independent means of inquiry into charges of maladministration by government departments; and the principle of such inquiry was extended to local government in 1972 and to the National Health Service in 1973. British governments have also established commissions for racial equality and for equal opportunity designed to extend the principle of non-discrimination to places of work; and legal aid introduced in 1949 has significantly increased the access of poorer citizens to the courts of law. None of these measures would have been possible had it not been for the widespread recognition in Britain that democracy is a good thing and that we should have more of it: in no way can they be equated with the evolution, if any, of government in Communist countries. I do not see many votes for anyone standing on a platform which sought, however indirectly, to suggest that the process be reversed.

There is always concern in Britain about the future of democracy and parliamentary government; we would be accused of complacency if it were otherwise. Mr. Moss stands in a long and honorable line of those who in modern times have voiced this concern. Fears of the future were common in that crucial period 1909-14 when party differences had provoked a constitutional crisis the like of which we have not seen since. Thus also the many worried voices raised in the 1930's when Blackshirts appeared on the streets of London and a Communist or two was voted into Parliament.

The economic strains of the past few years have resurrected this concern, but there are grounds for confidence, expressed most recently by the OECD survey of Western economies, that Britain will soon be in easier water. And even in these hard times, there has been plenty of evidence of the fundamental sanity of British society. For example, there has been unprecedented cooperation among government, management, and labor on an industrial strategy to revive our base. In 1976 we had the lowest level of strikes for ten years, despite the economic sacrifices demanded of us all. The British press has continued to criticize government actions with incisiveness and verve. The BBC and independent television have continued to be free from government or corporate pressures. And Parliament, as recent events have shown, has lost none of its vigor.

COMMENTARY readers should be left in no doubt of the British attachment to freedom which we

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have had to defend at so much cost twice in this century.

LAURENCE O'KEEFFE
Director General
British Information Services
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The United Kingdom, Robert Moss tells his readers, is bordering on a "police state"! . . . Under "currency fiddling and tax evasion" (i.e., fraud) he says: "The police-state powers that have been given to tax inspectors in Britain (who are now authorized to enter a man's home at any hour of the day or night, confiscate documents, and interrogate his family) are signs . . . of the totalitarian drift in government. . . . Old ladies are arrested at Heathrow with their life savings in a suitcase; the chairman of a well-known finance house says in private that he is ready to move his entire operation abroad 'within seven hours,' and Bank of England officials are up on charges of currency fiddling."

Well, well! It's fiction Mr. Moss should take up as a writer. . . . The Revenue cannot, uninvited, "enter a man's home" without having established its case before either a General or Special Commissioner of Tax (both of whom are independent of the Revenue). . . .

Coming now to "the chairman of a well-known finance house" who on a few days' notice is ready to "move his entire operations abroad"— . . . he must know little or nothing about the legal aspects of such a transaction. Apart from the purely civil section of the Taxes Act . . . there is the truly frightening Section 482 . . . which makes it a criminal act for any part of a company's trade or business to be transferred abroad without Treasury permission. The Crown has the right to issue "a warrant for the arrest of any person in respect to such an offense." Both sections were put on the statute book by Conservative governments.

I do not need to deal with the antics of the old ladies and their suitcases, but the slur on our civil service in the reference to Bank of England officials who are "up on charges of currency fiddling" is deplorable. I know nothing of the details of the case, but any irregular conduct by a civil servant must be . . . extremely isolated. . . .

A. G. MCBAIN
Glasgow, Scotland

ROBERT MOSS writes:

I agree with Laurence O'Keeffe that the reforms of the 1940's that he mentions represented an extension of the rights of citizens. But I doubt whether he would describe more recent "reforms" like the closed shop in quite the same terms. He maintains that there will not be many votes for politicians who want to reverse the process. If he includes in "the process" the growth of state intervention in the economy and the erosion of private choice in social services, he is demonstrably wrong—as shown by the landslide by-election at Ashfield on April 28, in which a swing of 20.8 per cent to the Conservatives cost Labor a safe seat.

Of course there has always been "concern" in Britain about the future of democratic institutions. Concern is healthy. What is not is the Ottomanic torpor and complacency that has overcome too many people who should be working to guarantee that future and to revitalize a dying economy. Mr. O'Keeffe does not fault a single point of substance that was made in my article. Instead, he recalls those features of British life that suggest that we are not, after all, a Third World country. Well of course not—anyway, not yet. I meant to provoke, and am delighted to find that I succeeded. If a people comes to take its freedoms for granted, it will not enjoy them for long.

It is encouraging to find a Scot defending the probity of English civil servants. But A.G. McBain was obviously not reading the British press last December, when the arrest of a Bank of England official on charges of foreign-currency fraud received major headlines. The official involved was a certain John Wales, and according to the *Daily Telegraph* report of December 18, he and his co-conspirators had obtained about £1 million by fraud. Such cases may be exceptional, but they make nonsense of Mr. McBain's suggestion that I am writing fiction. As for the chairman who told me about his preparations to move his operations abroad within seven hours, I was simply quoting what the man said—I do not profess to understand all the mechanics.

## Breira

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

By means of a selective quotation, accompanied by a misleading headline in an ad in the June issue of COMMENTARY, Breira gratuitously attempts to identify me with its position. Although it labels me as "a tough critic," it would have the reader believe that I offer a sympathetic answer to its question, "Why Breira?" I don't. My support of the right to dissent does not constitute the remotest endorsement of Breira. Instead, I argue for the need to debate issues within the organized structure of Jewish life as a means of heading off dangerous schisms of which Breira is the prime example. I consider Breira a divisive element which has made demands upon Israel while consistently refusing to make equivalent demands upon the Arabs. This is not dissent. This is reckless brinkmanship. It suggests that Breira is run by some whose vision of peace in the Middle East is skewed to Israel's disadvantage.

Characteristically, Breira advised me that it was running its ad when the June issue of COMMENTARY was already rolling off the presses, so that the responsibility of alerting me would be discharged, but just too late. More than affront to me, this tactic speaks loudly about an organization which preaches to American Jews in lofty moral tones.

Breira's ad did note that in one of my articles I refer to its "lopsided position." Nevertheless, it chose to exclude the following, which gives added weight to my opposition to its policy: "[Breira] headlines its demands on Israel and buries its demands on the Arabs in fine print."

Why Breira? I understand how it emerged, but I find no justification for its existence.

[Rabbi] DAVID POLISH
Evanston, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Passages from a talk I had given to a group of Jewish faculty in England, and which I subsequently published in *interChange,* were quoted in a full-page ad by Breira in the June COMMENTARY. I do not disagree with what I wrote in the original talk, or with what was reprinted from that talk in the Breira ad. But I did not intend, when I published the article in *interChange,* that it should be part of the warfare over Breira. I was sorry to see it used in this ad, and I was not consulted on its use.

NATHAN GLAZER
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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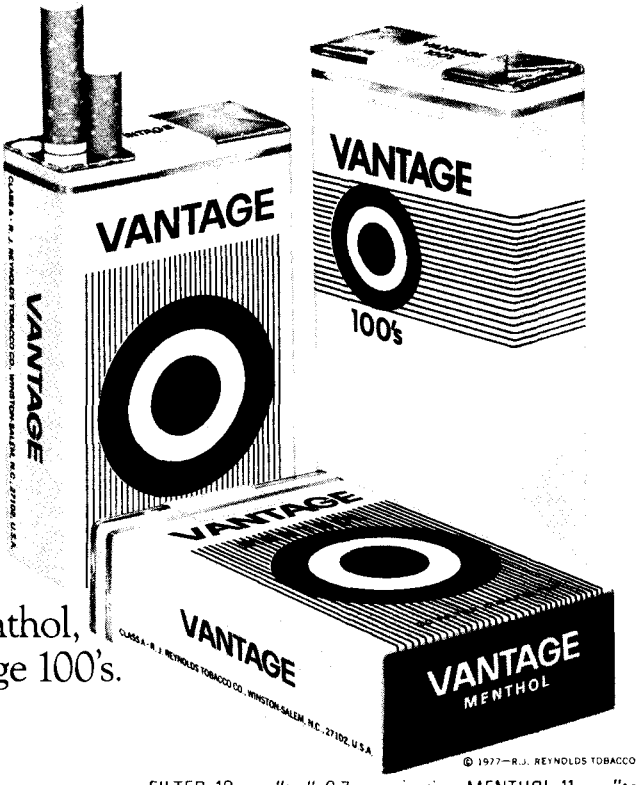


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# Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War

*Richard Pipes*

In a recent interview with the *New Republic*, Paul Warnke, the newly appointed head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, responded as follows to the question of how the United States ought to react to indications that the Soviet leadership thinks it possible to fight and win a nuclear war. "In my view," he replied, "this kind of thinking is on a level of abstraction which is unrealistic. It seems to me that instead of talking in those terms, which would indulge what I regard as the primitive aspects of Soviet nuclear doctrine, we ought to be trying to educate them into the real world of strategic nuclear weapons, which is that nobody could possibly win."[1]

Even after allowance has been made for Mr. Warnke's notoriously careless syntax, puzzling questions remain. On what grounds does he, a Washington lawyer, presume to "educate" the Soviet general staff composed of professional soldiers who thirty years ago defeated the Wehrmacht—and, of all things, about the "real world of strategic nuclear weapons" of which they happen to possess a considerably larger arsenal than we? Why does he consider them children who ought not to be "indulged"? And why does he chastise for what he regards as a "primitive" and unrealistic strategic doctrine not those who hold it, namely the Soviet military, but Americans who worry about their holding it?

Be all that as it may, even if Mr. Warnke refuses to take Soviet strategic doctrine seriously, it behooves us to take Mr. Warnke's views of Soviet doctrine seriously. He not only will head our SALT II team; his thinking as articulated in the above statement and on other occasions reflects all the conventional wisdom of the school of strategic theory dominant in the United States, one of whose leading characteristics is scorn for Soviet views on nuclear warfare.

American and Soviet nuclear doctrines, it needs stating at the outset, are starkly at odds. The prevalent U.S. doctrine holds that an all-out war between countries in possession of sizable nuclear arsenals would be so destructive as to leave no winner; thus resort to arms has ceased to represent a rational policy option for the leaders of such countries vis-à-vis one another. The classic dictum of Clausewitz, that war is politics pursued by other means, is widely believed in the United States to have lost its validity after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Soviet doctrine, by contrast, emphatically asserts that while an all-out nuclear war would indeed prove extremely destructive to both parties, its outcome would not be mutual suicide: the country better prepared for it and in possession of a superior strategy could win and emerge a viable society. "There is profound erroneousness and harm in the disorienting claims of bourgeois ideologies that there will be no victor in a thermonuclear world war," thunders an authoritative Soviet publication.[2] The theme is mandatory in the current Soviet military literature. Clausewitz, buried in the United States, seems to be alive and prospering in the Soviet Union.

The predisposition of the American strategic community is to shrug off this fundamental doctrinal discrepancy. American doctrine has been and continues to be formulated and implemented by and large without reference to its Soviet counterpart. It is assumed here that there exists one and only one "rational" strategy appropriate to the age of thermonuclear weapons, and that this strategy rests on the principle of "mutual deterrence" developed in the United States some two decades ago. Evidence that the Russians do not share this doctrine which, as its name indicates, postulates reciprocal attitudes, is usually dismissed with the explanation that they are clearly lagging behind us: given time and patient "education," they will surely come around.

Richard Pipes, a new contributor, is Frank B. Baird, Jr. Professor of History at Harvard, and former director of the Russian Research Center there. He also served as chairman of "Team B," which was appointed last year by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to prepare an alternative estimate of Soviet strategic objectives to the one done by the CIA. Mr. Pipes's most recent book is *Russia Under the Old Regime*.

[1] "The Real Paul Warnke," the *New Republic*, March 26, 1977, p. 23.

[2] N.V. Karabanov in N.V. Karabanov, et al., *Filosofskoe nasledie V. I. Lenina i problemy sovremennoi voiny* ("The Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and the Problems of Contemporary War") (Moscow, 1972), pp. 18-19, cited in Leon Gouré, Foy D. Kohler, and Mose L. Harvey, eds., *The Role of Nuclear Forces in Current Soviet Strategy* (1974), p. 60.



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It is my contention that this attitude rests on a combination of arrogance and ignorance; that it is dangerous; and that it is high time to start paying heed to Soviet strategic doctrine, lest we end up deterring no one but ourselves. There is ample evidence that the Soviet military say what they mean, and usually mean what they say. When the recently deceased Soviet Minister of Defense, Marshal Grechko, assures us: "We have never concealed, and do not conceal, the fundamental, principal tenets of our military doctrine,"[3] he deserves a hearing. This is especially true in view of the fact that Soviet military deployments over the past twenty years make far better sense in the light of Soviet doctrine, "primitive" and "unrealistic" as the latter may appear, than when reflected in the mirror of our own doctrinal assumptions.

MISTRUST of the military professional, combined with a pervasive conviction, typical of commercial societies, that human conflicts are at bottom caused by misunderstanding and ought to be resolved by negotiations rather than force, has worked against serious attention to military strategy by the United States. We have no general staff; we grant no higher degrees in "military science"; and, except for Admiral Mahan, we have produced no strategist of international repute. America has tended to rely on its insularity to protect it from aggressors, and on its unique industrial capacity to help crush its enemies once war was under way. The United States is accustomed to waging wars of its own choosing and on its own terms. It lacks an ingrained strategic tradition. In the words of one historian, Americans tend to view both military strategy and the armed forces as something to be "employed intermittently to destroy occasional and intermittent threats posed by hostile powers."[4]

This approach to warfare has had a number of consequences. The United States wants to win its wars quickly and with the smallest losses in American lives. It is disinclined, therefore, to act on protracted and indirect strategies, or to engage in limited wars and wars of attrition. Once it resorts to arms, it prefers to mobilize the great might of its industrial plant to produce vast quantities of the means of destruction with which in the shortest possible time to undermine the enemy's will and ability to continue the struggle. Extreme reliance on technological superiority, characteristic of U.S. warfare, is the obverse side of America's extreme sensitivity to its own casualties; so is indifference to the casualties inflicted on the enemy. The strategic bombing campaigns waged by the U.S. Air Force and the RAF against Germany and Japan in World War II excellently implemented this general attitude. Paradoxically, America's dread of war and casualties pushes it to adopt some of the most brutal forms of warfare, involving the indiscriminate destruction of the enemy's homeland with massive civilian deaths.

These facts must be borne in mind to understand the way the United States reacted to the advent of the nuclear bomb. The traditional military services—the army and the navy—whose future seemed threatened by the invention of a weapon widely believed to have revolutionized warfare and rendered conventional forces obsolete, resisted extreme claims made on behalf of the bomb. But they were unable to hold out for very long. An alliance of politicians and scientists, backed by the Air Force, soon overwhelmed them. "Victory through Air Power," a slogan eminently suited to the American way of war, carried all before it once bombs could be devised whose explosive power was measured in kilotons and megatons.

The U.S. Army tried to argue after Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the new weapons represented no fundamental breakthrough. No revolution in warfare had occurred, its spokesman claimed: atomic bombs were merely a more efficient species of the aerial bombs used in World War II, and in themselves no more able to ensure victory than the earlier bombs had been. As evidence, they could point to the comprehensive U.S. Strategic Bombing Surveys carried out after the war to assess the effects of the bombing campaigns. These had demonstrated that saturation raids against German and Japanese cities had neither broken the enemy's morale nor paralyzed his armaments industry; indeed, German productivity kept on rising in the face of intensified Allied bombing, attaining its peak in the fall of 1944, on the eve of capitulation.

And when it came to horror, atomic bombs had nothing over conventional ones: as against the 72,000 casualties caused by the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, conventional raids carried out against Tokyo and Dresden in 1945 had caused 84,000 and 135,000 fatalities, respectively. Furthermore, those who sought to minimize the impact of the new weapon argued, atomic weapons in no sense obviated the need for sizable land and sea forces. For example, General Ridgway, as Chief of Staff in the early 1950's, maintained that war waged with tactical nuclear weapons would demand larger rather than smaller field armies since these weapons were more complicated, since they would produce greater casualties, and since the dispersal of troops required by nuclear tactics called for increasing the depth of the combat zone.[5]

As we shall note below, similar arguments disputing the revolutionary character of the nuclear weapon surfaced in the Soviet Union, and there promptly came to dominate strategic theory. In

[3] A.A. Grechko, *Vooruzhonnye sily sovetskogo gosudarstva* ("The Armed Forces of the Soviet State") (Moscow, 1975), p. 345.

[4] Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (1973), p. 368.

[5] Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier* (1956), pp. 296-97.

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the United States, they were just as promptly silenced by a coalition of groups each of which it suited, for its own reasons, to depict the atomic bomb as the "absolute weapon" that had, in large measure, rendered traditional military establishments redundant and traditional strategic thinking obsolete.

Once World War II was over, the United States was most eager to demobilize its armed forces. Between June 1945 and June 1946, the U.S. Army reduced its strength from 8.3 to 1.9 million men; comparable manpower cuts were achieved in the navy and air force. Little more than a year after Germany's surrender, the military forces of the United States, which at their peak had stood at 12.3 million men, were cut down to 3 million; two years later they declined below 2 million. The demobilization proceeded at a pace (if not in a manner) reminiscent of the dissolution of the Russian army in the revolutionary year of 1917. Nothing could have stopped this mass of humanity streaming homeward. To most Americans peacetime conditions meant reversion to a skeletal armed force.

Yet, at the same time, growing strains in the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, and mounting evidence that Stalin was determined to exploit the chaotic conditions brought about by the collapse of the Axis powers to expand his domain, called for an effective military force able to deter the Soviets. The United States could not fulfill its role as leader of the Western coalition without an ability to project its military power globally.

In this situation, the nuclear weapon seemed to offer an ideal solution: the atomic bomb could hardly have come at a better time from the point of view of U.S. international commitments. Here was a device so frighteningly destructive, it was believed, that the mere threat of its employment would serve to dissuade would-be aggressors from carrying out their designs. Once the Air Force received the B-36, the world's first intercontinental bomber, the United States acquired the ability to threaten the Soviet Union with devastating punishment without, at the same time, being compelled to maintain a large and costly standing army.

Reliance on the nuclear deterrent became more imperative than ever after the conclusion of the Korean war, in the course of which U.S. defense expenditures had been sharply driven up. President Eisenhower had committed himself to a policy of fiscal restraint. He wanted to cut the defense budget appreciably, and yet he had to do so without jeopardizing either America's territorial security or its worldwide commitments. In an effort to reconcile these contradictory desires, the President and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, enunciated in the winter of 1953-54 a strategic doctrine which to an unprecedented degree based the country's security on a single weapon, the nuclear deterrent. In an address to the United Nations in December 1953, Eisenhower argued that since there was no defense against nuclear weapons (i.e., thermonuclear or hydrogen bombs, which both countries were then beginning to produce), war between the two "atomic colossi" would leave no victors and probably cause the demise of civilization. A month later, Dulles enunciated what came to be known as the doctrine of "massive retaliation." The United States, he declared, had decided "to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing." Throughout his address, Dulles emphasized the fiscal benefits of such a strategy, "more basic security at less cost."

The Eisenhower-Dulles formula represented a neat compromise between America's desires to reduce the defense budget and simultaneously to retain the capacity to respond to Soviet threats. The driving force was not, however, military but budgetary: behind "massive retaliation" (as well as its offspring, "mutual deterrence") lay *fiscal* imperatives. In the nuclear deterrent, the United States found a perfect resolution of the conflicting demands of domestic and foreign responsibilities. For this reason alone its adoption was a foregone conclusion: the alternatives were either a vast standing army or forfeiture of status as a leading world power. The Air Force enthusiastically backed the doctrine of massive retaliation. As custodian of the atomic bomb, it had a vested interest in a defense posture of which that weapon was the linchpin. And since in the first postwar decade the intercontinental bomber was the only available vehicle for delivering the bomb against an enemy like the Soviet Union, the Air Force could claim a goodly share of the defense budget built around the retaliation idea.

Although the Soviet Union exploded a fission bomb in 1949 and announced the acquisition of a fusion (or hydrogen) bomb four years later, the United States still continued for a while longer to enjoy an effective monopoly on nuclear retaliation, since the Soviet Union lacked the means of delivering quantities of such bombs against U.S. territory. That situation changed dramatically in 1957 when the Soviets launched the Sputnik. This event, which their propaganda hailed as a great contribution to the advancement of science (and ours as proof of the failures of the American educational system!), represented in fact a significant military demonstration, namely, the ability of the Russians to deliver nuclear warheads against the United States homeland, until then immune from direct enemy threats. At this point massive retaliation ceased to make much sense and before long yielded to the doctrine of "mutual deterrence." The new doctrine postulated that inasmuch as both the Soviet Union and the United States possessed (or would soon possess) the means of de-

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stroying each other, neither country could rationally contemplate resort to war. The nuclear stockpiles of each were an effective deterrent which ensured that they would not be tempted to launch an attack.

This doctrine was worked out in great and sophisticated detail by a bevy of civilian experts employed by various government and private organizations. These physicists, chemists, mathematicians, economists, and political scientists came to the support of the government's fiscally-driven imperatives with scientific demonstrations in favor of the nuclear deterrent. Current U.S. strategic theory was thus born of a marriage between the scientist and the accountant. The professional soldier was jilted.

A LARGE part of the U.S. scientific community had been convinced as soon as the first atomic bomb was exploded that the nuclear weapon, which that community had conceived and helped to develop, had accomplished a complete revolution in warfare. This conclusion was reached without much reference to the analysis of the effects of atomic weapons carried out by the military, and indeed without consideration of the traditional principles of warfare. It represented, rather, an act of faith on the part of an intellectual community which held strong pacifist convictions and felt deep guilt at having participated in the creation of a weapon of such destructive power. As early as 1946, in an influential book sponsored by the Yale Institute of International Affairs, under the title *The Absolute Weapon*, a group of civilian strategic theorists enunciated the principles of the mutual-deterrence theory which subsequently became the official U.S. strategic doctrine. The principal points made in this work may be summarized as follows:

1. Nuclear weapons are "absolute weapons" in the sense that they can cause unacceptable destruction, but also and above all because there exists against them no possible defense. When the aggressor is certain to suffer the same punishment as his victim, aggression ceases to make sense. Hence war is no longer a rational policy option, as it had been throughout human history. In the words of Bernard Brodie, the book's editor: "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment had been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose" (p. 76).

2. Given the fact that the adjective "absolute" means, by definition, incapable of being exceeded or surpassed, in the nuclear age military superiority has become meaningless. As another contributor to the book, William T.R. Fox, expressed it: "When dealing with the absolute weapon, arguments based on relative advantage lose their point" (p. 181). From which it follows that the objective of modern defense policy should be not superiority in weapons, traditionally sought by the military, but "sufficiency"; just enough nuclear weapons to be able to threaten a potential aggressor with unacceptable retaliation—in other words, an "adequate" deterrent, no more, no less.

3. Nuclear deterrence can become effective only if it restrains mutually—i.e., if the United States and the Soviet Union each can deter the other from aggression. An American monopoly on nuclear weapons would be inherently destabilizing, both because it could encourage the United States to launch a nuclear attack, and, at the same time, by making the Russians feel insecure, cause them to act aggressively. "Neither we nor the Russians can expect to feel even reasonably safe unless an atomic attack by one were certain to unleash a devastating atomic counterattack by the other," Arnold Wolfers maintained (p. 135). In other words, to feel secure the United States actually required the Soviet Union to have the capacity to destroy it.

BARELY one year after Hiroshima and three years before the Soviets were to acquire a nuclear bomb, *The Absolute Weapon* articulated the philosophical premises underlying the mutual-deterrence doctrine which today dominates U.S. strategic thinking. Modern strategy, in the opinion of its contributors, involved preventing wars rather than winning them, securing sufficiency in decisive weapons rather than superiority, and even ensuring the potential enemy's ability to strike back. Needless to elaborate, these principles ran contrary to all the tenets of traditional military theory, which had always called for superiority in forces and viewed the objective of war to be victory. But then, if one had decided that the new weapons marked a qualitative break with all the weapons ever used in combat, one could reasonably argue that past military experience, and the theory based on it, had lost relevance. Implicit in these assumptions was the belief that Clausewitz and his celebrated formula proclaiming war an extension of politics were dead. Henry Kissinger, who can always be counted upon to utter commonplaces in the tone of prophetic revelation, announced Clausewitz's obituary nearly twenty years after *The Absolute Weapon* had made the point, in these words: "The traditional mode of military analysis which saw in war a continuation of politics but with its own appropriate means is no longer applicable."[6]

American civilian strategists holding such views gained the dominant voice in the formulation of U.S. strategic doctrine with the arrival in Washington in 1961 of Robert S. McNamara as President Kennedy's Secretary of Defense. A prominent business executive specializing in finance and accounting, McNamara applied to the perennial problem of American strategy—how to maintain a

[6] In Michael Howard, ed., *The Theory and Practice of War* (London, 1965), p. 291.

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credible global military posture without a large and costly military establishment—the methods of cost analysis. These had first been applied by the British during World War II under the name "operations research" and subsequently came to be adopted here as "systems analysis." Weapons' procurement was to be tested and decided by the same methods used to evaluate returns on investment in ordinary business enterprises. Mutual deterrence was taken for granted: the question of strategic posture reduced itself to the issue of which weapons systems would provide the United States with effective deterrence at the least expense. Under McNamara the procurement of weapons, decided on the basis of cost effectiveness, came in effect to direct strategy, rather than the other way around, as had been the case through most of military history. It is at this point that applied science in partnership with budgetary accountancy—a partnership which had developed U.S. strategic theory—also took charge of U.S. defense policy.

As worked out in the 1960's, and still in effect today, American nuclear theory rests on these propositions: All-out nuclear war is not a rational policy option, since no winner could possibly emerge from such a war. Should the Soviet Union nevertheless launch a surprise attack on the United States, the latter would emerge with enough of a deterrent to devastate the Soviet Union in a second strike. Since such a retaliatory attack would cost the Soviet Union millions of casualties and the destruction of all its major cities, a Soviet first strike is most unlikely. Meaningful defenses against a nuclear attack are technically impossible and psychologically counterproductive; nuclear superiority is meaningless.

In accord with these assumptions, the United States in the mid-1960's unilaterally froze its force of ICBM's at 1,054 and dismantled nearly all its defenses against enemy bombers. Civil-defense was all but abandoned, as was in time the attempt to create an ABM system which held out the possibility of protecting American missile sites against a surprise enemy attack. The Russians were watched benignly as they moved toward parity with the United States in the number of intercontinental launchers, and then proceeded to attain numerical superiority. The expectation was that as soon as the Russians felt themselves equal to the United States in terms of effective deterrence, they would stop further deployments. The frenetic pace of the Soviet nuclear build-up was explained first on the ground that the Russians had a lot of catching up to do, then that they had to consider the Chinese threat, and finally on the grounds that they are inherently a very insecure people and should be allowed an edge in deterrent capability.

Whether mutual deterrence deserves the name of a strategy at all is a real question. As one student of the subject puts it:

> Although commonly called a "strategy," "assured destruction" was by itself an antithesis of strategy. Unlike any strategy that ever preceded it throughout the history of armed conflict, it ceased to be useful precisely where military strategy is supposed to come into effect: at the edge of war. It posited that the principal mission of the U.S. military under conditions of ongoing nuclear operations against [the continental United States] was to shut its eyes, grit its teeth, and reflexively unleash an indiscriminate and simultaneous reprisal against all Soviet aim points on a preestablished target list. Rather than deal in a considered way with the particular attack on hand so as to minimize further damage to the United States and maximize the possibility of an early settlement on reasonably acceptable terms, it had the simple goal of inflicting punishment for the Soviet transgression. Not only did this reflect an implicit repudiation of political responsibility, it also risked provoking just the sort of counterreprisal against the United States that a rational wartime strategy should attempt to prevent.[7]

I cite this passage merely to indicate that the basic postulates of U.S. nuclear strategy are not as self-evident and irrefutable as its proponents seem to believe; and that, therefore, their rejection by the Soviet military is not, in and of itself, proof that Soviet thinking is "primitive" and devoid of a sense of realism.

The principal differences between American and Soviet strategies are traceable to different conceptions of the role of conflict and its inevitable concomitant, violence, in human relations; and secondly, to different functions which the military establishment performs in the two societies.

In the United States, the consensus of the educated and affluent holds all recourse to force to be the result of an inability or an unwillingness to apply rational analysis and patient negotiation to disagreements: the use of force is *prima facie* evidence of failure. Some segments of this class not only refuse to acknowledge the existence of violence as a fact of life, they have even come to regard fear—the organism's biological reaction to the threat of violence—as inadmissible. "The notion of being threatened has acquired an almost class connotation," Daniel P. Moynihan notes in connection with the refusal of America's "sophisticated" elite to accept the reality of a Soviet threat. "If you're not very educated, you're easily frightened. And not being ever frightened can be a formula for self-destruction."[8]

[7] Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Selective Nuclear Options in American and Soviet Strategic Policy* (Rand Corporation, R-2034-DDRE, December 1976), p. 14. This study analyzes and approves of the refinement introduced into the U.S. doctrine by James R. Schlesinger as Secretary of Defense in the form of "limited-response options."

[8] Interview with *Playboy*, March 1977, p. 72.

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Now this entire middle-class, commercial, essentially Protestant ethos is absent from Soviet culture, whose roots feed on another kind of soil, and which has had for centuries to weather rougher political climes. The Communist revolution of 1917, by removing from positions of influence what there was of a Russian bourgeoisie (a class Lenin was prone to define as much by cultural as by socioeconomic criteria), in effect installed in power the *muzhik*, the Russian peasant. And the *muzhik* had been taught by long historical experience that cunning and coercion alone ensured survival: one employed cunning when weak, and cunning coupled with coercion when strong. Not to use force when one had it indicated some inner weakness. Marxism, with its stress on class war as a natural condition of mankind so long as the means of production were privately owned, has merely served to reinforce these ingrained convictions. The result is an extreme Social-Darwinist outlook on life which today permeates the Russian elite as well as the Russian masses, and which only the democratic intelligentsia and the religious dissenters oppose to any significant extent.

The Soviet ruling elite regards conflict and violence as natural regulators of all human affairs: wars between nations, in its view, represent only a variant of wars between classes, recourse to the one or the other being dependent on circumstances. A conflictless world will come into being only when the socialist (i.e., Communist) mode of production spreads across the face of the earth.

The Soviet view of armed conflict can be illustrated with another citation from the writings of the late Marshal Grechko, one of the most influential Soviet military figures of the post-World War II era. In his principal treatise, Grechko refers to the classification of wars formulated in 1972 by his U.S. counterpart, Melvin Laird. Laird divided wars according to engineering criteria—in terms of weapons employed and the scope of the theater of operations—to come up with four principal types of wars: strategic-nuclear, theater-nuclear, theater-conventional, and local-conventional. Dismissing this classification as inadequate, Grechko applies quite different standards to come up with his own typology:

> Proceeding from the fundamental contradictions of the contemporary era, one can distinguish, according to *sociopolitical criteria*, the following types of wars: (1) wars between states (coalitions) of two contrary social systems—capitalist and socialist; (2) civil wars between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or between the popular masses and the forces of the extreme reaction supported by the imperialists of other countries; (3) wars between imperialist states and the peoples of colonial and dependent states fighting for their freedom and independence; and (4) wars among capitalist states.[9]

This passage contains many interesting implications. For instance, it makes no allowance for war between two Communist countries, like the Soviet Union and China, though such a war seems greatly to preoccupy the Soviet leadership. Nor does it provide for war pitting a coalition of capitalist and Communist states against another capitalist state, such as actually occurred during World War II when the United States and the Soviet Union joined forces against Germany. But for our purposes, the most noteworthy aspect of Grechko's system of classification is the notion that social and national conflicts *within* the capitalist camp (that is, in all countries not under Communist control) are nothing more than a particular mode of class conflict of which all-out nuclear war between the superpowers is a conceivable variant. In terms of this typology, an industrial strike in the United States, the explosion of a terrorist bomb in Belfast or Jerusalem, the massacre by Rhodesian guerrillas of a black village or a white farmstead, differ from nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States only in degree, not in kind. All such conflicts are calibrations on the extensive scale by which to measure the historic conflict which pits Communism against capitalism and imperialism. Such conflicts are inherent in the stage of human development which precedes the final abolition of classes.

Middle-class American intellectuals simply cannot assimilate this mentality, so alien is it to their experience and view of human nature. Confronted with the evidence that the most influential elements in the Soviet Union do indeed hold such views, they prefer to dismiss the evidence as empty rhetoric, and to regard with deep suspicion the motives of anyone who insists on taking it seriously. Like some ancient Oriental despots, they vent their wrath on the bearers of bad news. How ironic that the very people who have failed so dismally to persuade American television networks to eliminate violence from their programs, nevertheless feel confident that they can talk the Soviet leadership into eliminating violence from its political arsenal!

Solzhenitsyn grasped the issue more profoundly as well as more realistically when he defined the antithesis of war not as the absence of armed conflict between nations—i.e., "peace" in the conventional meaning of the term—but as the absence of all violence, internal as well as external. His comprehensive definition, drawn from his Soviet experience, obversely matches the comprehensive Soviet definition of warfare.

WE KNOW surprisingly little about the individuals and institutions whose responsibility it is to formulate Soviet military doctrine. The matter is handled with the utmost secrecy, which conceals from the eyes of outsiders the controversies that undoubtedly

[9] Grechko, *Voorozhunnye sily sovetskogo gosudarstva*, pp. 347-48, emphasis added.

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surround it. Two assertions, however, can be made with confidence.

Because of Soviet adherence to the Clausewitzian principle that warfare is always an extension of politics—i.e., subordinate to overall political objectives (about which more below)—Soviet military planning is carried out under the close supervision of the country's highest political body, the Politburo. Thus military policy is regarded as an intrinsic element of "grand strategy," whose arsenal also includes a variety of non-military instrumentalities.

Secondly, the Russians regard warfare as a science (*nauka*, in the German sense of *Wissenschaft*). Instruction in the subject is offered at a number of university-level institutions, and several hundred specialists, most of them officers on active duty, have been accorded the Soviet equivalent of the Ph.D. in military science. This means that Soviet military doctrine is formulated by full-time specialists: it is as much the exclusive province of the certified military professional as medicine is that of the licensed physician. The civilian strategic theorist who since World War II has played a decisive role in the formulation of U.S. strategic doctrine is not in evidence in the Soviet Union, and probably performs at best a secondary, consultative function.

ITS PENCHANT for secrecy notwithstanding, the Soviet military establishment does release a large quantity of unclassified literature in the form of books, specialist journals, and newspapers. Of the books, the single most authoritative work at present is unquestionably the collective study, *Military Strategy*, edited by the late Marshal V. D. Sokolovskii, which summarizes Soviet warfare doctrine of the nuclear age.[10] Although published fifteen years ago, Sokolovskii's volume remains the only Soviet strategic manual publicly available—a solitary monument confronting a mountain of Western works on strategy. A series called "The Officer's Library" brings out important specialized studies.[11] The newspaper *Krasnaia zvezda* ("Red Star") carries important theoretical articles which, however, vie for the reader's attention with heroic pictures of Soviet troops storming unidentified beaches and firing rockets at unnamed foes. The flood of military works has as its purpose indoctrination, an objective to which the Soviet high command attaches the utmost importance: indoctrination both in the psychological sense, designed to persuade the Soviet armed forces that they are invincible, as well as of a technical kind, to impress upon the officers and ranks the principles of Soviet tactics and the art of operations.

To a Western reader, most of this printed matter is unadulterated rubbish. It not only lacks the sophistication and intellectual elegance which he takes for granted in works on problems of nuclear strategy; it is also filled with a mixture of pseudo-Marxist jargon and the crudest kind of Russian jingoism. Which is one of the reasons why it is hardly ever read in the West, even by people whose business it is to devise a national strategy against a possible Soviet threat. By and large the material is ignored. Two examples must suffice. *Strategy in the Missile Age*, an influential work by Bernard Brodie, one of the pioneers of U.S. nuclear doctrine, which originally came out in 1959, and was republished in 1965, makes only a few offhand allusions to Soviet nuclear strategy, and then either to note with approval that it is "developing along lines familiar in the United States" (p. 171), or else, when the Russians prefer to follow their own track, to dismiss it as a "ridiculous and reckless fantasy" (p. 215). Secretary of Defense McNamara perused Sokolovskii and "remained unimpressed," for nowhere in the book did he find "a sophisticated analysis of nuclear war."[12]

The point to bear in mind, however, is that Soviet military literature, like all Soviet literature on politics broadly defined, is written in an elaborate code language. Its purpose is not to dazzle with originality and sophistication but to convey to the initiates messages of grave importance. Soviet policy-makers may speak to one another plainly in private, but when they take pen in hand they invariably resort to an "Aesopian" language, a habit acquired when the forerunner of today's Communist party had to function in the Czarist underground. Buried in the flood of seemingly meaningless verbiage, nuggets of precious information on Soviet perceptions and intentions can more often than not be unearthed by a trained reader. In 1958-59 two American specialists employed by the Rand Corporation, Raymond L. Garthoff and Herbert S. Dinerstein, by skillfully deciphering Soviet literature on strategic problems and then interpreting this information against the background of the Soviet military tradition, produced a remarkably prescient forecast af actual Soviet military policies of the 1960's and 1970's.[13] Unfortunately, their findings were largely ignored by U.S. strategists from the scientific community who had convinced themselves that there was only one strategic doctrine appropriate to the age of nuclear weapons, and that therefore evidence indicating that the Soviets were

[10] *Voennaia strategiia* (Moscow, 1962). Since 1962 there have been two revised editions (1963 and 1968). The 1962 edition was immediately translated into English; but currently the best version is that edited by Harriet Fast Scott (Crane-Russak, 1975) which renders the third edition but collates its text with the preceding two.

[11] To date, twelve volumes in this series have been translated into English and made publicly available through the U.S. Government Printing Office.

[12] William W. Kaufmann, *The McNamara Strategy* (1964), p. 97.

[13] Garthoff's principal works are *Soviet Military Doctrine* (1953), *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (1958), and *The Soviet Image of Future War* (1959). Dinerstein wrote *War and the Soviet Union* (1959).

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adopting a different strategy could be safely disregarded.

THIS predisposition helps explain why U.S. strategists persistently ignored signs indicating that those who had control of Soviet Russia's nuclear arsenal were not thinking in terms of mutual deterrence. The calculated nonchalance with which Stalin at Potsdam reacted to President Truman's confidences about the American atomic bomb was a foretaste of things to come. Initial Soviet reactions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki were similar in tone: the atomic weapon had not in any significant manner altered the science of warfare or rendered obsolete the principles which had guided the Red Army in its victorious campaigns against the Wehrmacht. These basic laws, known as the five "constant principles" that win wars, had been formulated by Stalin in 1942. They were, in declining order of importance: "stability of the home front," followed by morale of the armed forces, quantity and quality of the divisions, *military equipment*, and, finally, ability of the commanders.[14] There was no such thing as an "absolute weapon"—weapons altogether occupied a subordinate place in warfare; defense against atomic bombs was entirely possible.[15] This was disconcerting, to be sure, but it could be explained away as a case of sour grapes. After all, the Soviet Union had no atomic bomb, and it was not in its interest to seem overly impressed by a weapon on which its rival enjoyed a monopoly.[16]

In September 1949 the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear device. Disconcertingly, its attitude to nuclear weapons did not change, at any rate not in public. For the remaining four years, until Stalin's death, the Soviet high command continued to deny that nuclear weapons required fundamental revisions of accepted military doctrine. With a bit of good will, this obduracy could still have been rationalized: for although the Soviet Union now had the weapon, it still lacked adequate means of delivering it across continents insofar as it had few intercontinental bombers (intercontinental rockets were regarded in the West as decades away). The United States, by contrast, possessed not only a fleet of strategic bombers but also numerous air bases in countries adjoining Soviet Russia. So once again one could find a persuasive explanation of why the Russians refused to see the light. It seemed reasonable to expect that as soon as they had acquired both a stockpile of atomic bombs and a fleet of strategic bombers, they would adjust their doctrine to conform with the American.

Events which ensued immediately after Stalin's death seemed to lend credence to these expectations. Between 1953 and 1957 a debate took place in the pages of Soviet publications which, for all its textural obscurity, indicated that a new school of Soviet strategic thinkers had arisen to challenge the conventional wisdom. The most articulate spokesman of this new school, General N. Talenskii, argued that the advent of nuclear weapons, especially the hydrogen bomb which had just appeared on the scene, did fundamentally alter the nature of warfare. The sheer destructiveness of these weapons was such that one could no longer talk of a socialist strategy automatically overcoming the strategy of capitalist countries: the same rules of warfare now applied to both social systems. For the first time doubt was cast on the immutability of Stalin's "five constant principles." In the oblique manner in which Soviet debates on matters of such import are invariably conducted, Talenskii was saying that perhaps, after all, war had ceased to represent a viable policy option. More important yet, speeches delivered by leading Soviet politicians in the winter of 1953-54 seemed to support the thesis advanced by President Eisenhower in his United Nations address of December 1953 that nuclear war could spell the demise of civilization. In an address delivered on March 12, 1954, and reported the following day in *Pravda*, Stalin's immediate successor, Georgii Malenkov, echoed Eisenhower's sentiments: a new world war would unleash a holocaust which "with the present means of warfare, means the destruction of world civilization."[17]

This assault on its traditional thinking—and, obliquely, on its traditional role—engendered a furious reaction from the Soviet military establishment. The Red Army was not about to let itself be relegated to the status of a militia whose principal task was averting war rather than winning it. Malenkov's unorthodox views on war almost certainly contributed to his downfall; at any rate, his dismissal in February 1955 as party leader was accompanied by a barrage of press denunciations of the notion that war had become unfeasible. There are strong indications that Malenkov's chief rival, Khrushchev, capitalized on the discontent of the military to form with it an alliance with whose help he eventually rode to power. The successful military counterattack seems to have been led by the World War II hero, Marshal Georgii Zhukov, whom Khrushchev made his Minister of Defense and brought into the Presidium. The guidelines of Soviet nuclear strategy, still in force today, were formulated during the first two years of Khrushchev's tenure (1955-57), under the leadership of Zhukov himself. They resulted in the unequivocal rejection of the notion of the "absolute weapon" and all the theories that U.S. strategists had de-

[14] Cited in J.M. Mackintosh, *The Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy* (London, 1962), pp. 90-91, emphasis added.

[15] Articles in the *New Times* for 1945-46 cited in P.M.S. Blackett, *Fear, War and the Bomb* (1949), pp. 163-65.

[16] We now know that orders to proceed with the development of a Soviet atomic bomb were issued by Stalin in June 1942, probably as a result of information relayed by Klaus Fuchs concerning the Manhattan Project, on which he was working at Los Alamos, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, XXIII, No. 10, December 1967, p. 15.

[17] Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union*, p. 71.

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duced from it. Stalin's view of the military "constants" was implicitly reaffirmed. Thus the re-Stalinization of Soviet life, so noticeable in recent years, manifested itself first in military doctrine.

TO UNDERSTAND this unexpected turn of events—so unexpected that most U.S. military theorists thus far have not been able to come to terms with it—one must take into account the function performed by the military in the Soviet system.

Unlike the United States, the Soviet government needs and wants a large military force. It has many uses for it, at home and abroad. As a regime which rests neither on tradition nor on a popular mandate, it sees in its military the most effective manifestation of government omnipotence, the very presence of which discourages any serious opposition from raising its head in the country as well as in its dependencies. It is, after all, the Red Army that keeps Eastern Europe within the Soviet camp. Furthermore, since the regime is driven by ideology, internal politics, and economic exigencies steadily to expand, it requires an up-to-date military force capable of seizing opportunities which may present themselves along the Soviet Union's immensely long frontier or even beyond. The armed forces of the Soviet Union thus have much more to do than merely protect the country from potential aggressors: they are the mainstay of the regime's authority and a principal instrumentality of its internal and external policies. Given the shaky status of the Communist regime internally, the declining appeal of its ideology, and the non-competitiveness of its goods on world markets, a persuasive case can even be made that, ruble for ruble, expenditures on the military represent for the Soviet leadership an excellent and entirely "rational" capital investment.

For this reason alone (and there were other compelling reasons too, as we shall see), the Soviet leadership could not accept the theory of mutual deterrence.[18] After all, this theory, pushed to its logical conclusion, means that a country can rely for its security on a finite number of nuclear warheads and on an appropriate quantity of delivery vehicles; so that, apart perhaps from some small mobile forces needed for local actions, the large and costly traditional military establishments can be disbanded. Whatever the intrinsic military merits of this doctrine may be, its broader implications are entirely unacceptable to a regime like the Soviet one for whom military power serves not only (or even primarily) to deter external aggressors, but also and above all to ensure internal stability and permit external expansion. Thus, ultimately, it is *political* rather than strictly strategic or fiscal considerations that may be said to have determined Soviet reactions to nuclear weapons and shaped the content of Soviet nuclear strategy. As a result, Soviet advocates of mutual deterrence like Talenskii were gradually silenced. By the mid-1960's the country adopted what in military jargon is referred to as a "war-fighting" and "war-winning" doctrine.

Given this fundamental consideration, the rest followed with a certain inexorable logic. The formulation of Soviet strategy in the nuclear age was turned over to the military who are in complete control of the Ministry of Defense. (Two American observers describe this institution as a "uniformed empire."[19]) The Soviet General Staff had only recently emerged from winning one of the greatest wars in history. Immensely confident of their own abilities, scornful of what they perceived as the minor contribution of the United States to the Nazi defeat, inured to casualties running into tens of millions, the Soviet generals tackled the task with relish. Like their counterparts in the U.S. Army, they were professionally inclined to denigrate the exorbitant claims made on behalf of the new weapon by strategists drawn from the scientific community; unlike the Americans, however, they did not have to pay much heed to the civilians. In its essentials, Soviet nuclear doctrine as it finally emerged is not all that different from what American doctrine might have been had military and geopolitical rather than fiscal considerations played the decisive role here as they did there.

SOVIET military theorists reject the notion that technology (i.e., weapons) decides strategy. They perceive the relationship to be the reverse: strategic objectives determine the procurement and application of weapons. They agree that the introduction of nuclear weapons has profoundly affected warfare, but deny that nuclear weapons have altered its essential quality. The novelty of nuclear weapons consists not in their destructiveness—that is, after all, a matter of degree, and a country like the Soviet Union which, as Soviet generals proudly boast, suffered in World War II the loss of over 20 million casualties, as well as the destruction of 1,710 towns, over 70,000 villages, and some 32,000 industrial establishments to win the war and emerge as a global power, is not to be intimidated by the prospect of destruction.[20] Rather, the innovation consists of the fact that nuclear weapons, coupled with intercontinental missiles, can by themselves carry out strategic missions which previously were accomplished only by means of prolonged tactical operations:

Nuclear missiles have altered the relationship of

[18] I would like to stress the word "theory," for the Russians certainly accept the *fact* of deterrence. The difference is that whereas American theorists of mutual deterrence regard this condition as mutually desirable and permanent, Soviet strategists regard it as undesirable and transient: they are entirely disinclined to allow us the capability of deterring them.

[19] Matthew P. Gallagher and Karl F. Spielmann, Jr., *Soviet Decision-Making for Defense* (1972), p. 39.

[20] The figures are from Grechko, *Vooruzhonnye sily*, p. 97.

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> tactical, operational, and strategic acts of the armed conflict. If in the past the strategic end-result was secured by a succession of sequential, most often long-term, efforts [and] comprised the sum of tactical and operational successes, strategy being able to realize its intentions only with the assistance of the art of operations and tactics, then today, by means of powerful nuclear strikes, strategy can attain its objectives directly.[21]

In other words, military strategy, rather than a casualty of technology, has, thanks to technology, become more central than ever. By adopting this view, Soviet theorists believe themselves to have adapted modern technological innovations in weaponry to the traditions of military science.

Implicit in all this is the idea that nuclear war is feasible and that the basic function of warfare, as defined by Clausewitz, remains permanently valid, whatever breakthroughs may occur in technology. "It is well known that the essential nature of *war as a continuation of politics does not change with changing technology and armament.*"[22] This code phrase from Sokolovskii's authoritative manual was certainly hammered out with all the care that in the United States is lavished on an amendment to the Constitution. It spells the rejection of the whole basis on which U.S. strategy has come to rest: thermonuclear war is not suicidal, it can be fought and won, and thus resort to war must not be ruled out.

In addition (though we have no solid evidence to this effect) it seems likely that Soviet strategists reject the mutual-deterrence theory on several technical grounds of a kind that have been advanced by American critics of this theory like Albert Wohlstetter, Herman Kahn, and Paul Nitze.

1. Mutual deterrence postulates a certain finality about weapons technology: it does not allow for further scientific breakthroughs that could result in the deterrent's becoming neutralized. On the offensive side, for example, there is the possibility of significant improvements in the accuracy of ICBM's or striking innovations in anti-submarine warfare; on the defensive, satellites which are essential for early warning of an impending attack could be blinded and lasers could be put to use to destroy incoming missiles.

2. Mutual deterrence constitutes "passive defense" which usually leads to defeat. It threatens punishment to the aggressor after he has struck, which may or may not deter him from striking; it cannot prevent him from carrying out his designs. The latter objective requires the application of "active defense"—i.e., nuclear preemption.

3. The threat of a second strike, which underpins the mutual-deterrence doctrine, may prove ineffectual. The side that has suffered the destruction of the bulk of its nuclear forces in a surprise first strike may find that it has so little of a deterrent left and the enemy so much, that the cost of striking back in retaliation would be exposing its own cities to total destruction by the enemy's third strike. The result could be a paralysis of will, and capitulation instead of a second strike.

Soviet strategists make no secret of the fact that they regard the U.S. doctrine (with which, judging by the references in their literature, they are thoroughly familiar) as second-rate. In their view, U.S. strategic doctrine is obsessed with a single weapon which it "absolutizes" at the expense of everything else that military experience teaches soldiers to take into account. Its philosophical foundations are "idealism" and "metaphysics"—i.e., currents which engage in speculative discussions of objects (in this case, weapons) and of their "intrinsic" qualities, rather than relying on pragmatic considerations drawn from experience.[23]

Since the mid-1960's, the proposition that thermonuclear war would be suicidal for both parties has been used by the Russians largely as a commodity for export. Its chief proponents include staff members of the Moscow Institute of the USA and Canada, and Soviet participants at Pugwash, Dartmouth, and similar international conferences, who are assigned the task of strengthening the hand of anti-military intellectual circles in the West. Inside the Soviet Union, such talk is generally denounced as "bourgeois pacifism."[24]

In the Soviet view, a nuclear war would be total and go beyond formal defeat of one side by the other: "War must not simply [be] the defeat of the enemy, it must be his destruction. This condition has become the basis of Soviet military strategy," according to the *Military-Historical Journal*.[25] Limited nuclear war, flexible response, escalation, damage limiting, and all the other numerous refinements of U.S. strategic doctrine find no place in its Soviet counterpart (although, of course, they are taken into consideration in Soviet operational planning).

For Soviet generals the decisive influence in the formulation of nuclear doctrine were the lessons of World War II with which, for understandable reasons, they are virtually obsessed. This experience they seem to have supplemented with knowledge gained from professional scrutiny of the record of Nazi and Japanese offensive operations, as well as the balance sheet of British and American strategic-bombing campaigns. More recently, the lessons of the Israeli-Arab wars of 1967 and 1973 in which they indirectly participated seem also to have impressed Soviet strategists, reinforcing previously held convictions. They also follow the Western literature, tending to side with the critics of mutual deterrence. The result of all these diverse influ-

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[21] *Metodologicheskie problemy voennoi teorii i praktiki* ("Methodological Problems of Military Theory and Practice") (Moscow, Ministry of Defense of the USSR, 1969), p. 288.

[22] V.D. Sokolovskii, *Soviet Military Strategy* (Rand Corporation, 1963), p. 99, emphasis added.

[23] See, e.g., *Metodologicheskie problemy*, pp. 289-90.

[24] Gouré et al., *The Role of Nuclear Forces*, p. 9.

[25] Cited *ibid.*, p. 106.

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ences is a nuclear doctrine which assimilates into the main body of the Soviet military tradition the technical implications of nuclear warfare without surrendering any of the fundamentals of this tradition.

The strategic doctrine adopted by the USSR over the past two decades calls for a policy diametrically opposite to that adopted in the United States by the predominant community of civilian strategists: not deterrence but victory, not sufficiency in weapons but superiority, not retaliation but offensive action. The doctrine has five related elements:, (1) preemption (first strike), (2) quantitative superiority in arms, (3) counterforce targeting, (4) combined-arms operations, and (5) defense. We shall take up each of these elements in turn.

PREEMPTION. The costliest lesson which the Soviet military learned in World War II was the importance of surprise. Because Stalin thought he had an understanding with Hitler, and because he was afraid to provoke his Nazi ally, he forbade the Red Army to mobilize for the German attack of which he had had ample warning. As a result of this strategy of "passive defense," Soviet forces suffered frightful losses and were nearly defeated. This experience etched itself very deeply on the minds of the Soviet commanders: in their theoretical writings no point is emphasized more consistently than the need never again to allow themselves to be caught in a surprise attack. Nuclear weapons make this requirement especially urgent because, according to Soviet theorists, the decision in a nuclear conflict in all probability will be arrived at in the initial hours. In a nuclear war the Soviet Union, therefore, would not again have at its disposal the time which it enjoyed in 1941-42 to mobilize reserves for a victorious counteroffensive after absorbing devastating setbacks.

Given the rapidity of modern warfare (an ICBM can traverse the distance between the USSR and the United States in thirty minutes), not to be surprised by the enemy means, in effect, to inflict surprise on him. Once the latter's ICBM's have left their silos, once his bombers have taken to the air and his submarines to sea, a counterattack is greatly reduced in effectiveness. These considerations call for a preemptive strike. Soviet theorists draw an insistent, though to an outside observer very fuzzy, distinction between "preventive" and "preemptive" attacks. They claim that the Soviet Union will never start a war—i.e., it will never launch a preventive attack—but once it had concluded that an attack upon it was imminent, it would not hesitate to preempt. They argue that historical experience indicates outbreaks of hostilities are generally preceded by prolonged diplomatic crises and military preparations which signal to an alert command an imminent threat and the need to act. Though the analogy is not openly drawn, the action which Soviet strategists seem to have in mind is that taken by the Israelis in 1967, a notably successful example of "active defense" involving a well-timed preemptive strike. (In 1973, by contrast, the Israelis pursued the strategy of "passive defense," with unhappy consequences.) The Soviet doctrine of nuclear preemption was formulated in the late 1950's, and described at the time by Garthoff and Dinerstein in the volumes cited above.

A corollary of the preemption strategy holds that a country's armed forces must always be in a state of high combat readiness so as to be able to go over to active operations with the least delay. Nuclear warfare grants no time for mobilization. Stress on the maintenance of a large ready force is one of the constant themes of Soviet military literature. It helps explain the immense land forces which the USSR maintains at all times and equips with the latest weapons as they roll off the assembly lines.

QUANTITATIVE SUPERIORITY. There is no indication that the Soviet military share the view prevalent in the U.S. that in the nuclear age numbers of weapons do not matter once a certain quantity had been attained. They do like to pile up all sorts of weapons, new on top of old, throwing away nothing that might come in handy. This propensity to accumulate hardware is usually dismissed by Western observers with contemptuous references to a Russian habit dating back to Czarist days. It is not, however, as mindless as it may appear. For although Soviet strategists believe that the ultimate outcome in a nuclear war will be decided in the initial hours of the conflict, they also believe that a nuclear war will be of long duration: to consummate victory —that is, to destroy the enemy—may take months or even longer. Under these conditions, the possession of a large arsenal of nuclear delivery systems, as well as of other types of weapons, may well prove to be of critical importance. Although prohibited by self-imposed limitations agreed upon in 1972 at SALT I from exceeding a set number of intercontinental ballistic-missile launchers, the Soviet Union is constructing large numbers of so-called Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile launchers (i.e., launchers of less than intercontinental range), not covered by SALT. Some of these could be rapidly converted into regular intercontinental launchers, should the need arise.[26]

Reliance on quantity has another cause, namely, the peculiarly destructive capability of modern missiles equipped with Multiple Independently-targettable Reentry Vehicles, or MIRV's. The nose cones of MIRVed missiles, which both super-

[26] I have in mind the SS-20, a recently developed Soviet rocket. This is a two-stage version of the intercontinental SS-16 which can be turned into an SS-16 with the addition of a third booster and fired from the same launcher. Its production is not restricted by SALT I and not covered by the Vladivostok Accord.

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powers possess, when in mid-course, split like a peapod to launch several warheads, each aimed at a separate target. A single missile equipped with three MIRV's of sufficient accuracy, yield, and reliability can destroy up to three of the enemy's missiles—provided, of course, it catches them in their silos, before they have been fired (which adds another inducement to preemption). Theoretically, assuming high accuracy and reliability, should the entire American force of 1,054 ICBM's be MIRVed (so far only half of them have been MIRVed), it would take only 540 American ICBM's, each with three MIRV's, to attack the entire Soviet force of 1,618 ICBM's. The result would leave the United States with 514 ICBM's and the USSR with few survivors. Unlikely as the possibility of an American preemptive strike may be, Soviet planners apparently prefer to take no chances; they want to be in a position rapidly to replace ICBM's lost to a sudden enemy first strike. Conversely, given its doctrine of preemption, the Soviet Union wants to be in a position to destroy the largest number of American missiles with the smallest number of its own, so as to be able to face down the threat of a U.S. second strike. Its most powerful ICBM, the SS-18, is said to have been tested with up to 10 MIRV's (compared to 3 of the Minuteman-3, America's only MIRVed ICBM). It has been estimated that 300 of these giant Soviet missiles, authorized under SALT I, could seriously threaten the American arsenal of ICBM's.

COUNTERFORCE. Two terms commonly used in the jargon of modern strategy are "counterforce" and "countervalue." Both terms refer to the nature of the target of a strategic nuclear weapon. Counterforce means that the principal objective of one's nuclear missiles are the enemy's forces—i.e., his launchers as well as the related command and communication facilities. Countervalue means that one's principal targets are objects of national "value," namely the enemy's population and industrial centers.

Given the predominantly defensive (retaliatory) character of current U.S. strategy, it is naturally predisposed to a counter*value* targeting policy. The central idea of the U.S. strategy of deterrence holds that should the Soviet Union dare to launch a surprise first strike at the United States, the latter would use its surviving missiles to lay waste Soviet cities. It is taken virtually for granted in this country that no nation would consciously expose itself to the risk of having its urban centers destroyed—an assumption which derives from British military theory of the 1920's and 1930's, and which influenced the RAF to concentrate on strategic bombing raids on German cities in World War II.

The Soviet high command has never been much impressed with the whole philosophy of countervalue strategic bombing, and during World War II resisted the temptation to attack German cities. This negative attitude to bombing of civilians is conditioned not by humanitarian considerations but by cold, professional assessments of the effects of that kind of strategic bombing as revealed by the Allied Strategic Bombing Surveys. The findings of these surveys were largely ignored in the United States, but they seem to have made a strong impression in the USSR. Not being privy to the internal discussions of the Soviet military, we can do no better than consult the writings of an eminent British scientist, P.M.S. Blackett, noted for his pro-Soviet sympathies, whose remarkable book *Fear, War and the Bomb,* published in 1948-49, indicated with great prescience the lines which Soviet strategic thinking were subsequently to take.

Blackett, who won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1948, had worked during the war in British Operations Research. He concluded that strategic bombing was ineffective, and wrote his book as an impassioned critique of the idea of using atomic weapons as a strategic deterrent. Translating the devastation wrought upon Germany into nuclear terms, he calculated that it represented the equivalent of the destruction that would have been caused by 400 "improved" Hiroshima-type atomic bombs. Yet despite such punishment, Nazi Germany did not collapse. Given the much greater territory of the Soviet Union and a much lower population density, he argued, it would require "thousands" of atomic bombs to produce decisive results in a war between America and Russia.[27] Blackett minimized the military effects of the atomic bombing on Japan. He recalled that in Hiroshima trains were operating forty-eight hours after the blast; that industries were left almost undamaged and could have been back in full production within a month; and that if the most elementary civil-defense precautions had been observed, civilian casualties would have been substantially reduced. Blackett's book ran so contrary to prevailing opinion and was furthermore so intemperately anti-American in tone that its conclusions were rejected out of hand in the West.

Too hastily, it appears in retrospect. For while it is true that the advent of hydrogen bombs a few years later largely invalidated the estimates on which he had relied, Blackett correctly anticipated Soviet reactions. Analyzing the results of Allied saturation bombing of Germany, Soviet generals concluded that it was largely a wasted effort. Sokolovskii cites in his manual the well-known figures showing that German military productivity rose throughout the war until the fall of 1944, and concludes: "It was not so much the economic struggle

[27] Blackett, *Fear*, p. 88. As a matter of fact, recent unofficial Soviet calculations stress that the United States dropped on Vietnam the TNT equivalent of 650 Hiroshima-type bombs—also without winning the war: *Kommunist Vooruzhonnykh Sil* ("The Communist of the Armed Forces"), No. 24, December 1973, p. 27, cited in Gouré et al., *The Role of Nuclear Forces*, p. 104.

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and economic exhaustion [i.e., countervalue bombing] that were the causes for the defeat of Hitler's Germany, but rather the armed conflict and the defeat of its armed forces [i.e., the counterforce strategy pursued by the Red Army.]"[28]

Soviet nuclear strategy is counter*force* oriented. It targets for destruction—at any rate, in the initial strike—not the enemy's cities but his military forces and their command and communication facilities. Its primary aim is to destroy not civilians but soldiers and their leaders, and to undermine not so much the will to resist as the capability to do so. In the words of Grechko:

> The Strategic Rocket Forces, which constitute the basis of the military might of our armed forces, are designed to annihilate the means of the enemy's nuclear attack, large groupings of his armies, and his military bases; to destroy his military industries; [and] to disorganize the political and military administration of the aggressor as well as his rear and transport.[29]

Any evidence that the United States may contemplate switching to a counterforce strategy, such as occasionally crops up, throws Soviet generals into a tizzy of excitement. It clearly frightens them far more than the threat to Soviet cities posed by the countervalue strategic doctrine.

COMBINED-ARMS OPERATIONS. Soviet theorists regard strategic nuclear forces (organized since 1960 into a separate arm, the Strategic Rocket Forces) to be the decisive branch of the armed services, in the sense that the ultimate outcome of modern war would be settled by nuclear exchanges. But since nuclear war, in their view, must lead not only to the enemy's defeat but also to his destruction (i.e., his incapacity to offer further resistance), they consider it necessary to make preparations for the follow-up phase, which may entail a prolonged war of attrition. At this stage of the conflict, armies will be needed to occupy the enemy's territory, and navies to interdict his lanes of communications. "In the course of operations [battles], armies will basically complete the final destruction of the enemy brought about by strikes of nuclear rocket weapons."[30] Soviet theoretical writings unequivocally reject reliance on any one strategy (such as the *Blitzkrieg*) or on any one weapon, to win wars. They believe that a nuclear war will require the employment of all arms to attain final victory.

The large troop concentrations of Warsaw Pact forces in Eastern Europe—well in excess of reasonable defense requirements—make sense if viewed in the light of Soviet combined-arms doctrine. They are there not only to have the capacity to launch a surprise land attack against NATO, but also to attack and seize Western Europe with a minimum of damage to its cities and industries *after* the initial strategic nuclear exchanges have taken place, partly to keep Europe hostage, partly to exploit European productivity as a replacement for that of which the Soviet Union would have been deprived by an American second strike.

As for the ocean-going navy which the Soviet Union has now acquired, it consists primarily of submarines and ground-based naval air forces, and apparently would have the task of cleaning the seas of U.S. ships of all types and cutting the sea lanes connecting the United States with allied powers and sources of raw materials.

The notion of an extended nuclear war is deeply embedded in Soviet thinking, despite its being dismissed by Western strategists who think of war as a one-two exchange. As Blackett noted sarcastically already in 1948-49: "Some armchair strategists (including some atomic scientists) tend to ignore the inevitable counter-moves of the enemy. More chess playing and less nuclear physics might have instilled a greater sense of the realities."[31] He predicted that a World War III waged with the atomic bombs then available would last longer than either of its predecessors, and require combined-arms operations—which seems to be the current Soviet view of the matter.

DEFENSE. As noted, the U.S. theory of mutual deterrence postulates that no effective defense can be devised against an all-out nuclear attack: it is this postulate that makes such a war appear totally irrational. In order to make this premise valid, American civilian strategists have argued against a civil-defense program, against the ABM, and against air defenses.

Nothing illustrates better the fundamental differences between the two strategic doctrines than their attitudes to defense against a nuclear attack. The Russians agreed to certain imprecisely defined limitations on ABM after they had initiated a program in this direction, apparently because they were unable to solve the technical problems involved and feared the United States would forge ahead in this field. However, they then proceeded to build a tight ring of anti-aircraft defenses around the country while also developing a serious program of civil defense.

Before dismissing Soviet civil-defense efforts as wishful thinking, as is customary in Western circles, two facts must be emphasized.

One is that the Soviet Union does not regard civil defense to be exclusively for the protection of ordinary civilians. Its chief function seems to be to protect what in Russia are known as the "cadres," that is, the political and military leaders as well as industrial managers and skilled workers—those who could reestablish the political and economic system once the war was over. Judging by Soviet

[28] Sokolovskii, *Soviet Military Strategy* (3rd edition), p. 21.
[29] A.A. Grechko, *Na strazhe mira i stroitel'stva Kommunizma*, ("Guarding Peace and the Construction of Communism") (Moscow, 1971), p. 41.
[30] *Metodologicheskie problemy*, p. 288.
[31] Blackett, *Fear*, p. 79.

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definitions, civil defense has as much to do with the proper functioning of the country during and immediately after the war as with holding down casualties. Its organization, presently under Deputy Minister of Defense, Colonel-General A. Altunin, seems to be a kind of shadow government charged with responsibility for administering the country under the extreme stresses of nuclear war and its immediate aftermath.[32]

Secondly, the Soviet Union is inherently less vulnerable than the United States to a countervalue attack. According to the most recent Soviet census (1970), the USSR had only nine cities with a population of one million or more; the aggregate population of these cities was 20.5 million, or 8.5 per cent of the country's total. The United States 1970 census showed thirty-five metropolitan centers with over one million inhabitants, totaling 84.5 million people, or 41.5 per cent of the country's aggregate. It takes no professional strategist to visualize what these figures mean. In World War II, the Soviet Union lost 20 million inhabitants out of a population of 170 million—i.e., 12 per cent; yet the country not only survived but emerged stronger politically and militarily than it had ever been. Allowing for the population growth which has occurred since then, this experience suggests that as of today the USSR could absorb the loss of 30 million of its people and be no worse off, in terms of human casualties, than it had been at the conclusion of World War II. In other words, all of the USSR's multimillion cities could be destroyed without trace or survivors, and, provided that its essential cadres had been saved, it would emerge less hurt in terms of casualties than it was in 1945.

Such figures are beyond the comprehension of most Americans. But clearly a country that since 1914 has lost, as a result of two world wars, a civil war, famine, and various "purges," perhaps up to 60 million citizens, must define "unacceptable damage" differently from the United States which has known no famines or purges, and whose deaths from all the wars waged since 1775 are estimated at 650,000—fewer casualties than Russia suffered in the 900-day siege of Leningrad in World War II alone. Such a country tends also to assess the rewards of defense in much more realistic terms.

How significant are these recondite doctrinal differences? It has been my invariable experience when lecturing on these matters that during the question period someone in the audience will get up and ask: "But is it not true that we and the Russians already possess enough nuclear weapons to destroy each other ten times over" (or fifty, or a hundred—the figures vary)? My temptation is to reply: "Certainly. But we also have enough bullets to shoot every man, woman, and child, and enough matches to set the whole world on fire. The point lies not in our ability to wreak total destruction: it lies in intent." And insofar as military doctrine is indicative of intent, what the Russians think to do with their nuclear arsenal is a matter of utmost importance that calls for close scrutiny.

Enough has already been said to indicate the disparities between American and Soviet strategic doctrines of the nuclear age. These differences may be most pithily summarized by stating that whereas we view nuclear weapons as a deterrent, the Russians see them as a "compellant"—with all the consequences that follow. Now it must be granted that the actual, operative differences between the two doctrines may not be quite as sharp as they appear in the public literature: it is true that our deterrence doctrine leaves room for some limited offensive action, just as the Russians include elements of deterrence in their "war-fighting" and "war-winning" doctrine. Admittedly, too, a country's military doctrine never fully reveals how it would behave under actual combat conditions. And yet the differences here are sharp and fundamental enough, and the relationship of Soviet doctrine to Soviet deployments sufficiently close, to suggest that ignoring or not taking seriously Soviet military doctrine may have very detrimental effects on U.S. security. There is something innately destabilizing in the very fact that we consider nuclear war unfeasible and suicidal for both, and our chief adversary views it as feasible and winnable for himself.

SALT misses the point at issue so long as it addresses itself mainly to the question of numbers of strategic weapons: equally important are qualitative improvements within the existing quotas, and the size of regular land and sea forces. Above all, however, looms the question of intent: as long as the Soviets persist in adhering to the Clausewitzian maxim on the function of war, mutual deterrence does not really exist. And unilateral deterrence is feasible only if we understand the Soviet war-winning strategy and make it impossible for them to succeed.

[32] On the subject of civil defense, see Leon Gouré, *War Survival in Soviet Strategy* (1976).

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# Carter and Israel

*Steven L. Spiegel*

ONE of Jimmy Carter's talents, both as a candidate for the Presidency and now as President, has been the ability to state controversial issues in such a manner that each of two conflicting parties can believe he has taken its side. This is the case, certainly, with the President's pronouncements on the Middle East. Yet despite all the attendant ambiguousness, there are always a number of distinct points to be discerned in what Carter has to say, provided one can separate the core from the periphery. Now that, with the victory of the Likud coalition in Israel's elections and the formation of a new government there, the condition of U.S.-Israel relations is once again on the agenda, it would seem particularly useful to try to ascertain just what the position of the Carter administration is on the Middle East, how this position differs from that of previous administrations, and what the current drift of U.S. policy portends for the future.

DURING the 1976 campaign, Jimmy Carter's views on the Middle East became known only gradually. Until late in the primaries, Carter seems to have been mistrusted by many American Jews, who generally gravitated to other Democratic candidates better known and considered more reliable on issues of special concern to the Jewish community, including Israel. As the campaign progressed, however, Carter began to speak out in ever more detailed and distinct fashion on the Middle East, and what he had to say was very reassuring to supporters of Israel. Thus in a major address on June 6, 1976, he asserted unequivocally that the precondition for peace in the Middle East was a change in the Arab attitude toward Israel:

> Now this change of attitude on the part of the Arab states must be reflected in tangible and concrete actions including first of all the recognition of Israel, which they have not yet done; secondly, diplomatic relations with Israel; third, a peace treaty with Israel; fourth, open frontiers with Israel's neighbors; lastly, an end to the embargo and official hostile propaganda against the State of Israel. . . . Final borders between Israel and its neighbors should be determined in direct negotiations between the parties and they should not be imposed from outside.

On the Palestinians, the candidate was also quite explicit in endorsing an approach which seemed very close to the one then favored by the Israeli government:

> There ought to be territories ceded for the use of the Palestinians. I think they should be part of Jordan and be administered by Jordan. I think half the people in Jordan are Palestinians themselves. And that would be my own preference.

Israel's friends could not have been more pleased with these statements, as well as with the position taken by the candidate on foreign aid to Israel, on the question of arms sales to the Arab states, on oil and OPEC, and on the Arab boycott. By the end of the campaign, it was difficult to conceive of a more pro-Israel candidate than Jimmy Carter.

Once Carter became President, he began to explore possibilities for his own Arab-Israeli policy. The enterprise began with a series of trips. First the President sent his Secretary of State on a fact-finding tour to the Middle East, then the administration invited the key Middle East leaders to Washington. In the course of these meetings, as well as on other occasions over the last months, Carter has expressed his own views of what an ultimate Arab-Israeli settlement should look like. Taken together, they amount to a series of principles that are apparently intended to guide future American efforts.

First, Israel must have defensible, secure, and mutually recognized borders, but these ought to represent only "minor adjustments" from the pre-Six-Day War boundaries. Israel's actual "defense" lines, however, might be wider than the legal boundaries defined by the settlement; Carter appears to have in mind zones or monitoring stations manned by international or perhaps even Israeli forces.

Second, Carter believes in an "ultimate commitment to complete peace in the Middle East," in which he includes "the opening up of borders with free trade, tourist travel, cultural exchange between Israel and its neighbors."

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Third, the Palestinians are entitled to a "homeland." At the town meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts, in March, Carter called for this, although later he said he meant that "some provision has got to be made for the Palestinians, in the framework of the nation of Jordan or by some other means." By the time of his meeting with Syria's President Assad in early May, Carter was saying, more directly, "There must be a resolution of the Palestine problem and a homeland for the Palestinians." To which, however, he again later added: "The exact definition of what that homeland might be, the degree of independence of the Palestinian entity, its relationship with Jordan or perhaps Syria and others, the geographical boundaries of it, all have to be worked out by the parties involved."

Finally, Carter has claimed that "any agreement has to be between the parties concerned." He has added: "We will act as an intermediary when our good offices will serve well."

Seen in their entirety, these statements, like Carter's campaign statements before them, may be interpreted as broadly pro-Israel—especially when they are compared with previous statements by American leaders. Yet on closer inspection a number of doubts and questions arise, not only about the exact meaning of Carter's statements, but also about his ability or willingness to translate them into policy.

*Territories.* No administration since the Six-Day War has supported major territorial gains for Israel. Even in the euphoria of June 1967, Lyndon Johnson announced that "certainly, troops must be withdrawn" in the context of a settlement. Under Richard Nixon, Secretary of State William Rogers was simply being more explicit when he said that "any changes in the preexisting lines should not reflect the weight of conquest and should be confined to insubstantial alterations required for mutual security. We do not support expansionism. We believe troops must be withdrawn as [UN Resolution 242] provides."

Now President Carter has spoken of "minor adjustments" in the pre-June 1967 boundaries and at the same time of "defensible borders" for Israel. His use of the word "minor" is within the Rogers tradition, but his invocation of "defensible borders" and his distinction between defense lines and legal boundaries would appear to give Israel greater diplomatic flexibility. Still, it is difficult to see how "defensible" borders can involve only "minor adjustments," unless one's definition of "minor" is broad indeed or one understands the term "defensible" in a way that differs substantially from the Israeli understanding of it; in either case, a difficulty has been introduced and not yet resolved.

*Genuine peace.* Here Carter has broken new ground. Johnson spoke of "peace between the parties" and Rogers of Arab acceptance of "a permanent peace based on a binding agreement." Rogers also hinted vaguely of "a peace agreement between the parties" that "must be based on clear and stated intentions and a willingness to bring about basic changes in the attitudes and conditions which are characteristic of the Middle East today." Until the present administration, however, the assumption generally prevailed that the United States would accept a "negative peace" of non-belligerency, as favored by the Arabs, in which Israel's total isolation in the Middle East would continue as before. Incredible as it may seem, Carter is the first American President to call in detail for a positive peace, involving a normalization of Israel's position in the Middle East as part of a settlement.

This new theme has already caused serious difficulties for President Sadat of Egypt, who was on record as saying that genuine peace would have to wait until a generation after an agreement had been signed. Although it has since been reported that he indicated privately to the Carter administration that full normalization could be achieved five years after an agreement had been signed, and that some interim steps toward normal relations could take place even earlier, the two positions are practically indistinguishable. For in either case, he expects Israel to withdraw completely *first,* by which time there will be little incentive for the Arabs to keep their side of the bargain. This is exactly what happened in 1957; Israel withdrew from the Sinai under American pressure, whereupon the negotiations which Eisenhower had anticipated simply failed to occur. Sadat has also made it clear (in an ABC interview with Barbara Walters) that by normalization he still means only non-belligerency, which presents a basic difference from the Carter approach.

It remains to be seen whether Carter will be prepared to insist on genuine peace when he realizes that such insistence may prevent his Middle East diplomacy from succeeding.

*The Palestinians.* On the Palestinians, Carter has been at his most ambiguous—not that previous policy was any clearer. At the time of the second Sinai disengagement agreement, Henry Kissinger promised in a memorandum that the U.S. would not deal with the PLO unless that organization recognized Israel's right to exist and accepted Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. However, one of Kissinger's deputies, Harold Saunders, was soon describing the Palestinian "dimension" of the Middle East conflict as in many ways the "heart" of the matter—much to the dismay of the Israelis, who believe the heart of the matter is the Arab refusal to accept the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Through the last eighteen months of the Ford administration the United States maintained its opposition to the PLO, but at the

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same time there were suggestions of potential American moves in another direction.

The Carter administration has continued the tradition of American waffling. On the one hand, the United States has remained firm in backing Israel's position of not negotiating with the PLO —a position strengthened by the refusal of the PLO itself to moderate its covenant calling for the dissolution of Israel as a Jewish state. On the other hand, the administration does still seek a Geneva conference, and the Arabs have insisted on some form of Palestinian presence at that conference. Even when Yitzhak Rabin was Prime Minister of Israel, there was much room for conflict with both sides in this particular debate. Under the new Israeli government, differences over this issue are likely to increase.

Carter's statements about a Palestinian "homeland" are dangerous even if he means a homeland within Jordan. For Jordan itself is part of Palestine—separated arbitrarily by the British from the original Mandate in 1922—and the Palestinians are a majority on the East Bank of the Jordan River just as they are on the West Bank. Does Carter then seek two Arab Palestines—analogous to the two Koreas or the two Germanies? Carter has never actually advocated the establishment of a "state," but then again he has never as President explicitly rejected the option either. His mounting references to a Palestinian homeland are bound to raise expectations among those Arabs and their American supporters who seek an independent sovereign Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The issue has been further confused, to Israel's detriment, by administration references to pre-1967 UN resolutions such as the original 1947 Partition Plan and the 1948 declaration granting the Palestinians the right to return to their homes or the choice of compensation for lost property. Although these references were based on a presidential misreading of the relevant resolutions and their history, they have now become part of the administration's public record.

If the President does not favor a West Bank Palestinian state, it is unclear where he differs from the position of major voices in the Rabin government, which was that if King Hussein of Jordan wished to make a Palestinian province out of whatever portion of the West Bank that Israel returned, there would be no objections on Israel's part. Hussein had envisioned a Palestinian province on the entire West Bank in his 1972 proposal for a "United Arab Kingdom." The disagreement between Hussein and the Israelis revolved around the question of borders, not around whether there could be such a province. As far as many Labor leaders were concerned, Jordan was free to organize itself in any manner it liked, once permanent borders were arranged. Either Carter was uninformed of that position or he found it unsatisfactory for some reason. In either case, what he is now seeking to do is to reorganize the kingdom of Jordan, which raises several new questions: Who will determine and assign the homeland to the Palestinians? How much autonomy will they have within Jordan? What role will the PLO accept?

*Procedures.* Carter's position that the parties concerned must come to an agreement *among themselves* stands in ultimate contradiction to his willingness to act as intermediary. While he has seemed to be against an imposed peace, he has not since the campaign endorsed direct negotiations but rather pressed for a Geneva conference attended by both the United States and the Soviet Union in addition to Arabs and Israelis. Even though the United States promised Israel at the time of Sinai II that it would make "every effort" to "insure at the conference that all the substantive negotiations will be on a bilateral basis," such promises have a way of being forgotten or reinterpreted as circumstances necessitate. Carter's statement to a group of three European journalists prior to his London trip in May does not augur well for his reliance on the interested parties themselves: "I would not hesitate if I saw clearly a fair and equitable solution to use the full strength of our own country and its persuasive powers to bring those nations to agreement."

Although all the involved parties now favor a Geneva conference, it is quite clear that each has its own conception of who is to attend and what should happen there. Israel and its American supporters have favored careful preparations, stressed the dangers of failure, opposed PLO participation, preferred bilateral contacts, and sought to limit Russian involvement. The Arabs, and those whose positions fall close to theirs, have emphasized the situation's urgency, sought an early convening of the Geneva conference with a PLO presence, and preferred a multilateral base of participation. The critical questions here are tactical: how and when to reach Geneva, and how to conduct the conference once it has been convened. The administration will be faced with a whole range of decisions relating to such procedural matters throughout its first term, and it has so far shown little sign that it knows what to do about them.

IN SHORT, there is ample evidence in the presidential statements concerning the Middle East that Carter's commitment to Israel—as expressed in his insistence on full normalization and in his advocacy of "defensible" borders—is real and deeply held; at the same time, however, there is sufficient ambiguousness in the statements themselves to give rise to doubts about their meaning, and little thought seems to have been devoted to their possible implications. Since no one understands precisely what Carter believes, there is plenty of room for future disillusionment.

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Carter's approach may be viewed positively as an innovative attempt to undo fixed assumptions and procedures; it is more likely the result, at least in part, of inexperience. Jimmy Carter may be a quick learner, but before becoming President he had never had a political dialogue with an Arab representative; King Hussein has met many more American Presidents than Carter has, and both Hussein and Rabin had visited the White House more often than Carter before January 20, 1977. In addition, before becoming President, Carter had been to Israel only once; his Secretary of State had never been to the area; and although his National Security Adviser had traveled to the region and written on the subject, he was hardly at home in its history and complexities.

A team that has had little experience with the details of foreign policy in any area—especially one as complex and difficult as the Middle East—is likely to depend on the bureaucracy. While convincing itself of its own authority by announcing broad if ambiguous guidelines, it can then resort to the "wisdom" of those with much practical experience to work out specific tactics and policies. From Israel's point of view this could be disastrous, for the Washington bureaucracy has classically tilted to the pro-Arab side of the spectrum (though there have been major exceptions—especially in the Pentagon). If the pattern continues, it could mean the worst of all worlds—a President who makes statements which can generally be interpreted as pro-Israel but who relies on the "experts" to execute policy.

What do these "experts" believe? On the evidence of congressional hearings and also of what has been published in the last few years in such journals as *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy* (from the ranks of whose editors and contributors Carter has drawn many key appointees), several assumptions about the nature of the Middle East conflict are now very widely shared. The first of these assumptions is that since the October 1973 war, the Arabs have been growing more moderate as the Israelis have become more intransigent. Moreover, it is believed, the spectacular rise of Arab economic power has made the Arabs more central to American interests, while Israel, with its economic and military needs, is more and more becoming only a burden. In addition, a deeper American involvement in the Arab countries—which, it is held, has long been prevented by our one-sided commitment to Israel—would serve as well as that commitment has done, and probably better, to keep the Soviet Union out of the Middle East. Finally, time is said to be running out for Israel both because of growing Arab strength and because of dissension and squabbling within Israel itself; if Israel is to be saved, it will only be as a result of purposeful American action, taken even over the objections of Israel itself, which can no longer be expected to see where its own best interests lie. (This most recently was the burden of an important article by George Ball in *Foreign Affairs*, "How to Save Israel In Spite of Herself.") Such American action, it is thought, should include pressing for the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

IN LINE with this set of beliefs, a policy has been emerging which, in contrast to what the President has *said*, has generally been unfavorable to Israel. For example:

1. The canceled sale to Israel of concussion bombs. There was much talk at the time about the evil nature of this weapon—the President even announced a study leading to the possible elimination of concussion bombs altogether from the American arsenal—and Israel's supporters were reminded that in any event the balance of the deal made by President Ford shortly before the 1976 election would be honored. Actually, however, another major part of the deal was the sale of FLIR night-vision equipment, and although the spirit of Ford's public promise was that Israel would receive the latest available technology, after long delays all that has been approved is the oldest version of this equipment, originally developed in the 1950's. As for Carter's study, one suspects that the bureaucracy will gradually bury it; concussion bombs still remain in the American arsenal.

If the administration is as concerned about arms control in the Middle East as it professes to be, one wonders why it did not abrogate the sale of sophisticated and easily transferable Maverick air-to-ground missiles to Saudi Arabia—a deal also made by Ford in the fall of 1976, despite considerable congressional opposition. The Mavericks provide the Arabs with a new technology they previously lacked, and dramatically increase the accuracy of their bombing capacity—thereby escalating the arms race. Carter himself had declared on September 30, 1976, during the campaign, that "There is no reason to think these [Maverick] missiles will increase security and stability in the Middle East. . . . No administration which was sensitive to the climate in the Middle East would let the sale go forward." Obviously, what happened was that the bureaucracy played on Carter's apprehensions over concussion bombs and simply overlooked the Mavericks sold to Saudi Arabia (as well as the American-made Hawk missiles sold to Jordan which threaten the Jordan-Israel balance in a possible future war).

Whatever the intrinsic arguments for or against concussion bombs, the cancellation of the deal was a signal to Israel that arrangements made by the United States are not necessarily firm and reliable (a lesson the Israelis will remember when Carter tries to trade Israeli withdrawals for American guarantees) and put the Arabs on notice that they could expect growing distance between Jerusalem and Washington.

2. Despite promises made by Kissinger, Carter

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vetoed the sale of $150-million worth of Israeli-built Kfir jets to Ecuador. For the Israelis, the deal was actually worth much more because of likely future sales in South America and elsewhere. The administration was quick to weigh in with pious sermons about the potential danger the sale would hold for the South American balance of power (even though Ecuador had already bought highly sophisticated British Jaguars equipped with U.S. technology), and it was also pointed out righteously that American companies had not been allowed to sell similar equipment in Latin America. While Carter fussed and the Israelis fumed, the Ecuadorians began negotiations with the French and Russians.

The Israelis were supposedly compensated for the loss of this deal with an increase in economic aid from $1.5 billion (in the Ford budget) to $1.785 billion. That sounded generous, but the Israelis had actually requested $2.3 billion and even the State Department had recommended $1.8 billion; it was the Ford budget officers who had reduced the sum to $1.5 billion in the first place. Since it was known that Israel's supporters in Congress were prepared to do battle over the original Ford figures, it seems likely that Carter would have raised the sum to at least the original State Department figure even without the flap over the Kfirs.

3. The administration has turned out to be more responsive to anti-Israel business interests in the Middle East than had originally been thought. Thus, the State Department found it necessary to complain about Israeli drilling in the Gulf of Suez at about the same time as the Kfir and concussion-bomb deals were being abrogated and Cyrus Vance was preparing to depart on his fact-finding mission. The Israeli activity is controversial under international law, but what purpose—other than the development of an "even-handed" reputation and the pursuit of Amoco's interests—were served by this public fretting? The solidification of Israel-U.S. relations during a period of delicate diplomatic and political transition, something presumably to be desired, was certainly not among the purposes so advanced.

4. Sensitivity to business concerns has been even clearer on the issue of the Arab boycott. In his second televised debate with President Ford during the campaign, Jimmy Carter said unequivocally, "I'll do everything I can as President to stop the boycott of American businesses by the Arab countries. It is not a matter of diplomacy with me; it is a matter of morality." Yet when the anti-boycott legislation, which the Ford administration had opposed, started to move through Congress, the administration sent Cyrus Vance to testify, thus immediately locating the issue within the context of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East, exactly as the Ford team had done, instead of within the context of American commercial practice.

In the ensuing weeks, officials of the Carter administration zigged and zagged; while avowing adherence to their proclaimed principles, they generally took positions in detail which undermined the principles they were pledged to protect. In the end, the administration bought the compromise struck between three major American Jewish organizations and the Business Roundtable—a compromise which not only took Carter off the political hook but was weaker than legislation which had been foreseen in January 1977. Why the compromise? Basically, the leaders of the three organizations decided they could not squander whatever political capital they had with the administration and the business community over this particular issue. But the legislation contains a built-in loophole; with the Commerce Department empowered to define exceptions and rules, further controversy is assured.

5. Carter's fear of nuclear proliferation is widely known and justifiably respected in the United States; Israel's probable "bomb in the basement" is widely suspected but less well regarded, even among that country's most ardent supporters. A clash between the two nations over nonproliferation could have been anticipated as soon as Carter was elected. General administration policies on the sale of nuclear fuels abroad are already interfering with Israel-American negotiations over the nuclear reactor offered by President Nixon in 1974 to both Cairo and Jerusalem. For two years, the United States and Israel negotiated the details of the proposed sale; the agreement was set to be sent to Congress for final approval, but the Carter administration has now canceled the deal because it means to establish a new American policy on nuclear-reactor sales. The administration has also indicated that it is unwilling to renew the long-standing agreement to supply fuels to Israel's research reactor near Tel Aviv, as part of its international restrictions on the sale of fuels abroad.

These delicate matters represent another blow to U.S. credibility in Israeli eyes, even if they are intertwined with the problems over proliferation the administration is having with other allies as well. If Carter's program should prove successful and proliferation in the Middle East *is* impeded, Israel might actually gain. It seems more likely, however, that the administration will succeed in cutting down on arrangements with Israel but will not succeed in preventing reactor sales to the Arabs by Europeans. As an example, France's recent deal with Pakistan (which may now be permanently delayed) was fraught with danger for Israel because of the close cooperation between Pakistan and the Arab countries. In the end, Israel will probably lose an important future source of energy as well as a symbolic tie to the U.S.; since it will also maintain its nuclear option, one can imagine even further tension between Washington and Jerusalem on this whole issue.

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6. The administration's original version of a presidential review memorandum on arms-sales policy (PRM 12) provided for strict controls on arms sales, co-production agreements, and transfer of high technology, with exceptions for the NATO and ANZUS Pact countries and Japan. If left intact, this memorandum would have been devastating both for the Israeli defense effort and for the Israeli economy. It contradicted agreements made between Kissinger and the government of Israel at the time of the second Sinai disengagement agreement, and it also contradicted Carter's statements during the campaign that assistance to Israel had to be unquestioned if negotiations were to be conducted successfully. Now, Carter officials were using arguments identical to those employed by Ford—namely, that a lid had to be put on aid to Israel while delicate negotiations with the Arabs were in progress. In the end, Carter and Mondale did, under strong congressional pressure, reinstate Israel as a favored arms recipient, but a disturbing amount of symbolic damage had already been done.

THE victory of the Likud coalition in Israel's elections, however, suggests in its own way that the damage is more than merely symbolic. Likud received as many votes as it did for a variety of reasons: corruption and scandal in the Labor party; the resignation of Rabin; runaway inflation; frequent labor strikes; a generalized desire for change. It is also true that Yigael Yadin's reform party took votes away from Labor. But Jimmy Carter did not help. Uncertain arms flows, mixed signals from the Washington bureaucracy, talk of a Palestinian homeland during a cordial soirée with Hafez Assad the week before the election, public reminders to Yigal Allon that the United States would be offering "suggestions" to Israel concerning a peace settlement—all this was sheer folly if the hope was that a Labor government would be returned to office with a united coalition and a mandate for negotiations. Instead, the administration in effect issued a challenge to the Israeli electorate which that electorate accepted, presenting the Americans with a much more united Israeli government than had been expected—but not exactly in the direction that had been hoped.

It remains to be seen whether the United States under Jimmy Carter will end up ameliorating or exacerbating the situation in the Middle East, and whether President Carter himself will become a force for settlement or a force for war. On the basis of his administration's performance so far, there are grounds for fear and not too many grounds for hope. One cannot be totally reassured by a President who calls Hafez Assad "a strong supporter in the search for peace" and who claims that he himself has "no disturbing differences at all" with Saudi Arabia. Already since the elections in Israel, Carter has on several occasions made it absolutely clear that the United States intends to stand firm on its insistence that Israel must give up most, if not all, of the West Bank, and that he is prepared to bring tremendous pressure to bear on the new government to compromise on this point. By contrast, he has given little indication that he still stands equally firm on his earlier view that a settlement must *as a first principle* include "tangible and concrete actions" by the Arabs, including recognition and diplomatic and commercial relations, toward a full and genuine peace with Israel. Simply put, the Arabs must dramatically alter their past position on this issue, or Carter must back down from his own stated views, or Carter must be prepared to fail. One may be permitted the skeptical conclusion that the second is the likeliest of the three possibilities, in which case there will be no chance of achieving the only kind of settlement that could ever be expected to work.

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# Henry Adams at Nuremberg

## *A Fantasy*

Steven Schnur

He had missed the Civil War, had heard of the pyrotechnics and ruin from his comfortable vantage of a few thousand miles remove like a Xerxes of privilege and been puzzled by it. The letters from his brother Charles had intensified his isolation, albeit exalted, and by the time he returned to his native land the soil itself had forgotten the desolation. Of the many questions that had plagued him only one had found answer. The photographer, Brady, had preserved for him images of Atlanta, images that sprang out of the recess of memory as he drove through the ravaged streets of Nuremberg in 1945. For years his imagination had sought to animate those hauntingly lifeless daguerreotypes, to find in the refuse of history the source and course of man's energies. Yet he could find no hand, only the imprint of machines; and only machines could record the ruin: a ruin so swiftly visited and so quickly absorbed that but for a few seconds needed to transform glass plates into negative imagery, no record would exist. Adams's own eyelids now acted as such a shutter, powerless before the flood of new sights that forced his memory back to its origins.

Hurled from his comfortable train compartment into the very heart of a present past, Adams rode behind two gleaming white helmets in the bitter November cold. His open jeep crossed the devastated city on the way to the Palace of Justice rising like St. Michael above the rubble. Rat-like clusters of women and children huddled against charred stone walls trying to escape notice. Dressed in black, they burned the wooden remains of church and state in small fires trying to keep warm, fires that cast odd shadows on lifeless walls all along Adams's path.

Stepping from his jeep in the middle of the city, Adams walked into the remains of a cathedral. The only bit of color, some splinters of stained glass, lay in corners, wedged deeply between piles of stone like the rays they had once cast upon the floor. He had said of Chartres years ago that it reminded him of a smile. Where he now stood reminded him of the toothless grin of a madman. Wind howling through chinks in the remaining wall sounded like a chorus of the dead whistling through shattered skulls. What was it they were trying to tell him? He raised his collar against their icy blasts, full of bitter thoughts. His only children, the progeny of progress, lay scattered at his feet like so many charred bricks. For this, man had labored billions of years to raise himself from Darwin's Pteraspis! Not even the infinitely resilient Jew had escaped the collapse. Caught up with the rest of Europe in its own madness, its Civil War, what protection had there been in being a chameleon?

Forty years before, Adams had written of his education and invoked the *persona* of Israel Cohen, the Wandering Jew, because even in his endless meanderings the Jew could never forget his past. Circumcision alone served as a constant reminder of personal and cultural heritage. Adams had begun the work in a panic trying to recover the conditions that had constituted *his* heritage, conditions that had nearly disappeared by 1905. Only three fragile generations separated him from oblivion while the Jew had five millennia and a covenant with God. Yet now, forty years later, it seemed as if that covenant had been broken; some new dynamo oblivious to any prior claims of privilege controlled events. Polish Jews, Hitler *Jugend,* and the Virgin's precious light lay buried beneath the same rubble.

Back on the once great avenue Adams came upon a huge blackened stone blocking his path. Someone had chalked a white swastika on it in defiance of the occupation and the ubiquitous blackness. Had Sherman appeared from behind one of the crumbled walls, it would have confirmed Adams's belief that the comet of history followed the path of least resistance, the one already forged by Napoleon, Caesar, and Alexander. The high walls of rubble surrounding Adams threatened his equilibrium and neither the Virgin nor nieces could sweeten his imagination. How often in the past had the brilliance of their parti-colored souls delivered him from darkness; here the monochromatic starkness defied even them and the principle of

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life they embodied. Returning to his jeep he winced under the painfully bright reflection of his escorts' helmets. When they left him their passing was like the blessed extinguishing of an interrogator's lamp. In the dimmer light of his hotel room he dived one last time into a sea of documents, searching for causes but finding only names: thousands of pages of suspected Nazi criminals and their victims. History could not deal with such detail. Before settling in for the night he wrote a note to his friend, Robert Jackson, America's chief prosecutor, and a long letter to his nieces in Cambridge.

Just as he had nearly fifty years before, Adams sat in the rear of the courtroom watching the proceedings, bemused by the appurtenances of the Electric Age. This time it was not a single Jew, not a Dreyfus, who captured the world's attention, but his murderers, the murderers of half of Europe. Jackson had offered Adams a seat beside him and the American prosecutorial staff but he had refused: the glare of powerful floodlights trained on the defendants for photographic purposes obscured his vision. He had always preferred observing events from a comfortable distance. Dos Passos, perhaps, could stand the harsh lights, sitting with the reporters at the edge of the arena, his pen moving furiously while his left hand pressed his headphones to his ear. Adams did not need the machine. He listened without mediation, awed by the spectacle of several hundred men at the foot of the ruined Tower of Babel wired together in an effort to understand what had caused the collapse.

With automaton-like passivity men listened to the recitation of horrors contained in the indictment. Twenty-five thousand words told the story of degradation and collapse. Behind the translator's glass sat a dark-haired woman who reminded Adams of one of his nieces. While the details of torture ran from the prosecutor's lips like water along the Rhine, she served as intermediary between him and the accused. The twenty-one defendants listened to her, not to Jackson; she was their prosecutor; she reached into their past and brought to light the horrifying personifications of their depraved imaginations. Ribbentrop fainted under her relentless barrage of detail, the backward rush of facts overcoming his equilibrium. The bespectacled Jackson stood before them, to all the world their Nemesis, and yet by a curious act of judicial exigency the passionless voice of a nameless German woman intoned the charges and demanded punishment. Not one of the defendants looked at her during the course of the indictment. However brashly they faced the world, none could face his niece. Her face showed the strain of such a labor. More than once she stared senselessly at the glass, her features contorted by the details of horror she was forced to recite, yet when Adams lifted the headphones to hear her voice she conveyed none of her feelings. Machine-like, controlled, efficient, she spoke words the defendants themselves had spoken and written in another world, another age, a world Jackson was trying to reconstruct on paper, film, through the memories of victims, and by the reminder of the rubble outside.

The diary of "the Jew-Butcher of Cracow," Hans Frank, central to the understanding of the Nazi mind, seemed to Adams a great practical joke at his and his family's expense. While the prosecution recited lengthy passages, Adams could not help but recall the prolific diarists of his past. Who but an Adams could fill thirty-eight volumes with the minutiae of daily life and then turn them over to the world for judgment? In every generation one of his forebears devoted years to the papers of his sire, papers that painstakingly analyzed motives and behavior, that apologized for shortcomings and pleaded for guidance, that chronicled the efforts of intensely religious men seeking perfection. No thought went unrecorded, no pettiness unexamined. Like Moses, they sought to free themselves of every meanness so as to be worthy of entry into the Promised Land. If the negative of this impulse existed, an anti-Adams force that had the capacity to neutralize his ancestors, it existed in Frank. Only prejudice and hatred found expression. Page after page revealed the refuse of the Nazi mind in terms of the millions murdered and the plans to exterminate millions more. Adams had lived among Adamses for too long not to understand the motivation behind the keeping of such private records. His ancestors, in praising themselves with faint damns, wished to justify their works before men and God. If such was the motivation of the "Hangman of Poland," then history had indeed entered a new age, a perfect reversal of the past. And this mirror-opposite had collided with America in a global Civil War.

He had written years before that a German, Von Holst, understood America better than any living American. It had appeared then as if Germany was capable of learning the lessons of the United States, that its consolidation would prevent a repetition of that painful lesson of civil war and the aftermath of unscrupulous profiteering. Gould, Fiske, and the goldbugs, not the Jews of Cracow, deserved the fate of those murdered millions. Adams had written once that instead of investing capital in railroads, the enterpreneur of the 13th century had entrusted his savings to the Virgin; she repaid with interest in the life to come. But Gould, for Adams the symbol of the complex Jew, had realized he could invest himself. History at certain moments of stasis sucked up whatever crawled in the dark recesses of stagnant pools, using it as a source of energy. In that way Gould and his goldbugs had come to infect every aspect of American life. Dreyfus had done the same, swept up from obscurity, poisoning half of

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France with the vitriol of division. And now Germany had repeated the mistake, destroying itself in the effort to be purged of infection. To be successful, like Spain, they should have started centuries earlier, before the Jew had so tainted the blood that debridement was tantamount to suicide. Adams had no sympathy for either the parasite or its victim, they were indistinguishable. America was proof that the Jew was responsible for his fate, for he was in full control of it. What fascinated Adams was how he had manipulated a nation to destroy itself. If Darwin could have witnessed this wholesale suicide, would he have concluded that man was devolving? It had taken billions of years to develop and drop the first atomic bomb and just three days to repeat the effort. God had done as much, not more. All of time past had gone into the formation of the words, "In the beginning," from which earth and man followed as effortlessly as Nagasaki upon Hiroshima. Only now the process was reversed; whole cities disappeared in an instant as some vestigial instinct of self-destruction reasserted itself. Scientists had joined forces with bankers in a mutual suicide pact. Perhaps Albert Speer could better reveal than Adams the extent of that link and its consequences. A conversation with von Braun might have answered all Adams's questions, but the army jealously guarded that prize. Overnight he had become an American citizen: one more proof of the fraternal nature of the war.

THE FIRST four days of the trial passed rapidly, propelled by the blinding velocity of events being reviewed. By comparison the weekend recess plodded along like a Displaced Person. Adams tried during those long hours to chart the points and calculate the curve of history based on the week's revelations but the information was too overwhelming. His friend Jackson gave much of his time to discussions of the problems preoccupying Adams. Together they waded into the fresh waters of international justice and examined the delicate apparatus upon which the proceedings rested. That crimes as monstrous as those disclosed during the trial seemed beyond the jurisdiction of existing courts and laws was an irony not lost on any of the participants. To have simply shot the defendants as Stalin had suggested would have dispensed with the elegant and expensive process by which the defendants were proven guilty several hundred thousand times over, but it would have done no more than confirm Goering's sneer that the victor was always and would forever be the judge and the vanquished the accused. Jackson, however, insisted on the existence of a body of international law that superseded the traditional spoils of victory. In his letter to Truman he had outlined the sober, pragmatic moral code he intended to make the backbone of the prosecution. But already voices were associating America's devastation of Hiroshima and Dresden with Nazi initiative and bitterly denouncing the idea of such sullied hands casting the first stone. Jackson would have no part of such arguments. He was, Adams realized, a greater Calvinist than Adams's own ancestors. The order of events was crucial to the jurist, making possible the distinction between cause and effect, crime and punishment. It was not a question of who was so without sin as to be morally justified in casting that first stone; the law must first be served, even if by besmirched hands. The compounding of crimes on all sides did not erase the commission of the initial one, and it was that original sin that mattered most.

Yet what possibility existed for the empirical serving of justice? While twenty-one voices repeated, *"Nicht schuldig,"* untold millions of victims demanded an eye for an eye. Almost daily, Adams heard puzzling discussions between lawyers and staff concerning this disproportion. "Suppose," he heard one young lawyer say over lunch, "your defendant has been responsible for the gassing of ten thousand Jews and Gypsies while mine has only killed fifty prisoners of war. . . ." In that word "only" lay the seeds of insanity. Jackson had been forced to ask the court if the law was utterly helpless in the face of crimes of such magnitude. For which of the millions of victims was a single defendant to be hanged? If every account was settled the German people would cease to exist. Some new sliding scale had to be invoked.

As a child Adams had been amused by the fluid medieval measure of the king's foot. To the boy there was something wonderful in such flexibility, like the rigidities of Boston giving way to the liberties of Quincy. Now, in an age of retreat, such a measure was again being invoked. The life of a single victim was important only to the extent that it constituted part of a greater whole. The testimony of individual witnesses fused in a terrifying miasma that hung over the court as if over the gates of Hell. They seemed to be riding through a vast graveyard, passing like a plow through fields of eternity's dead. Often during Adams's historical musings he had wondered about the unrecorded infinite that left no trace of themselves and yet constituted the past as much as his ancestors did. In mockery of the simplistic reductions history was forced to make, claiming to find in the lives of a select few the thoughts of the many, an endless number of victims were being studied individually. Yet they remained faceless despite the prosecutor's efforts. They had no significance beyond the mode of their death.

In the midst of the darkness, Hess's *"Nein"* emerged as the only possible response. The other defendants recognized the authority of the court by pleading "Not Guilty"; Hess admitted no such authority. He denied the court's rights, its existence, and the past. It was the refuge of a madman but the only possible one. While the other defend-

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ants took an active part in their defense, Hess read novels and scribbled notes to himself. He refused to travel backward; the past in his amnesiac state was impossible; the trial was pure fantasy. To Adams, who had been impelled to examine not only his own past but that of his nation, Hess was yet another anti-Adams force. He, like Adams's ancestors, was history itself but without the Adams self-consciousness. He was pure historical energy, unencumbered by thought, the perfect symbol of a nation that had divorced mind and body in the belief that the Fuehrer would do everyone's thinking for them, freeing all from responsibility for their actions. No other explanation was possible for crimes, the simple contemplation of which convulsed the mind.

WAS Hess correct? Was the trial a ludicrous flexing of muscle in the shadow of the omnipotent dynamo? In its great elliptical course history was insensitive to reason. The lessons of Atlanta had not prevented Nuremberg. Would Nuremberg's discoveries fall into the same void? Hess, Frank, and Speer had the potential to answer these questions: Hess and Frank spoke to him from his ancestral past; Speer from his scientifically conditioned present. Goering and most of the others receded into the background, as ridiculous in their posture of innocence as Goering in his ill-fitting and pompous white uniform.

But Julius Streicher, the editor of *Der Stuermer,* remained in the foreground, a discomforting presence for Adams. Jackson had shown him copies of the newspaper in a moment that caused Adams some embarrassment. Was his friend aware of Adams's sympathies a half-century ago? At the time of those "hysterical ravings" of Drumont and the French ultra-Catholic press, he had believed in cause and effect. The deterioration of culture had to have an explanation in terms of human failings, and his brother Brooks had unearthed it. The seeds of America's destiny lay within every Puritan's identification with the Jews of the Bible. The catalyst in the degradation of American life was the sudden wedding of this Puritan preoccupation and the hordes of immigrant Jews that had overwhelmed the nation sixty years ago, bringing with them their nascent capitalism. Adams had not only marvelled at the eclipse of the English language by hundreds of peasant tongues but at the loss of native dignity to the lust for gold. The French had found in Dreyfus the same symbol of corruption. Whenever Dos Passos entered the courtroom, Adams wondered if Zola's ghost were returning to cloud the events in inflammatory pamphleteering. Zola had never understood that the innocence of a single Jew was less important than the rooting out of the sins of his fathers. Dreyfus had been on trial for the seeds of sedition disseminated by his ancestors. No Jew was innocent of that crime. To those who understood the forces of history, the need for the trial was self-evident, whatever the evidence. Adams, the conservative Christian anarchist, had held firmly to a teleological conception of history until the hubristic notion that men controlled events dissolved in the chaos of the new century. The destruction of the Jews proved that some greater force now held sway. Adams had come to Nuremberg to discover it. To the world this was to be a trial for the benefit of the several million Jews who perished, but Jackson understood that the trial was not for Jews alone. The fourth count of the indictment did not isolate any one race, it spoke of crimes against humanity. If the rumors Adams had heard from the State Department were correct, the four or five million Jewish victims were only a fraction of the perhaps one hundred million dead, many of whom would lie forever concealed behind Russia's dark curtain. Whatever the court decided, Adams no longer believed in the influence of such men as Drumont and Streicher. When they vituperated they were doing no more than telling a spinning dynamo to turn. They had not mobilized hate, they had merely exposed it to attack. Men like Streicher were opportunists who repeated in print what was said on the street and felt in the soul. If it were otherwise, such papers would have died like the thousands of radical journals that perished weekly for want of an identifying readership. *Der Stuermer* had become the voice of the father. Pasted on walls, it assuaged war wounds in sympathetic salts of vitriol, lying to its readers until the very last.

DURING weekend recesses Adams walked the ruined city. Without the white helmets of the American Military Police, he was able to penetrate into the misery of the survivors. He walked softly for the timid populace scattered at the sounds of occupation, scampering over the rubble like rodents. In the corner of a building exposed to the street two small girls dressed in skirts that bared their legs to the biting wind stood close beside an old woman and a small fire. What awed him was the silence. The woman emptied her pockets of two withered potatoes and began to roast them on a short length of wire. Neither of the girls complained of the wind that snapped their skirts against their reddened legs with the violence of a trapped bird's wings. How right he had been to refuse the company of nieces. Privacy and dignity were impossible here. Feeling an intruder, he walked on, passing for the second time the great black stone with its white swastika still brilliantly defiant—transfixing. Something in the black and white emblem spoke to him. From the distance of a few feet the separation between brilliance and darkness seemed clear and distinct, but the closer he examined the stone the more indefinite the separation became. Like the helmets of the

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Military Police the white swastika hurt his eyes. Even in the pale winter light it was difficult to look at. The black stone, enameled by the intense heat of a burning city, was a relief. When he moved, Adams could make out the indistinct, distorted outline of his face in the rock, but at rest his face blended into it. What was it that rose like the memory of long forgotten guilt? Jews! Like the refrain of a nursery rhyme the word danced and taunted him. He felt like one tossing with fever in the darkness of an endless night, unable to escape the relentless repetition of meaningless sounds. His mind's eye ran around the defendants' dock like a child at play, looking for a place to rest. The whiteness of Goering's uniform was repellent; by Hess the darkness was frightening; by Frank—by Frank there was room to rest. Feeling suddenly faint, Adams sank to his knees, leaning heavily against the stone, his face buried in the angle of his elbow. He was sweating despite the sharp cold. He struggled against faintness and nausea, breathing rapidly. Through closed eyes he could see that the line between the insignia of the Nazis and the rock had disappeared. Like newsprint under a microscope, no pure color existed, only the amalgam of opposite tones. What lay at the bottom of this, man's greatest disgrace, was the treacherous passivity that had permitted such slaughter. The violence of madness had never before surfaced and survived the bright light of exposure for so long. It had always done its work in darkness. But in the peculiar province of the Nazi mind such a hatred flourished, though denied every instant by thought. Adams now understood why he had spent a lifetime lamenting the loss of unity, for with its collapse had come the multiplicities of thought-free action that had overwhelmed Germany. Mind and body no longer functioned in concert, each acted independently with no interference from the other. Nazi culture had made a virtue of such schizophrenia. The unwitting Jew had been the perfect target, himself the personification of division, of otherness, of multiplicity—at least in the Nazi mind.

Adams remained kneeling while his vision and balance slowly returned. He resolved to take the trial in smaller doses. Since its opening he had attended every session. He would remain until the Christmas recess and then absent himself for a time. He got to his feet slowly, hesitantly separating himself from his support, and returned to the hotel, hoping to retire to his room unnoticed. He avoided the usual gathering place of lawyers, judges, and officers but met Sir Geoffrey upon the stairs. The Chief Justice remarked that Adams looked pale and asked how he came to have chalk all over his right arm. With a guilty motion Adams twisted his sleeve around, surprised by the mark on his upper arm. He described briefly the details of his faintness, drawing a grave caution from Sir Geoffrey. The city, he said, was unsafe. Buildings, or what remained of them, collapsed almost daily. Undetonated bombs exploded without warning. Madmen prowled the streets painting swastikas on walls and communing with the Fuehrer. Adams nodded his understanding, concealing his intention to return to the streets. Only in the absolute desolation of the city did he feel a glimmering sense of the underlying energies propelling events. History, his life's work, too often went astray in its attempts to cope with human feelings. However elusive the events, the feelings were too various to record and too complex to understand. On the street, however, freed from the gargantuan legal construct that nested upon the hill, he could at least sense them. Adams made no claim to understand the German psyche but he was not willing, as so many others were, to dehumanize the Nazis. If they were monsters they were human ones and insight could only be achieved in terms of their humanness.

GERMANY had reached its nadir, America some unprecedented zenith, and yet the two seemed inextricably bound together, a kind of global seesaw that belied progress and decline. With the needed room for expansion exhausted, America had reversed its direction and begun to build a new Church of Santa Maria di Ara Coeli on the unstable ruins of the Old World. But the construction was too hasty to promise permanence. Adams at times feared that the very ground he trod would give way. The nausea and fluid womblike feeling of suspension he had experienced by the rock seemed to portend some resurrection from his past as dislocating and threatening as it was nurturing.

Brady had tramped across the battlefields of America recording the dead and the living in images that spoke eloquently of brutal effect but not of cause. The living soldier was usually pictured at rest or at considerable remove from the enemy; the dead were depicted in isolation; rarely were the two combined. But in the films presented by Jackson to the court the entire ghastly process of the living becoming the dead opened before Adams. He was forced to watch the rape and murder of a score of naked Jews in a burning town. What purpose could there have been in such a record? Where was the transformational artistry that suffused Brady's photos? Adams had never before witnessed a murder. With excruciating slowness Jackson projected and described each frame of the film. Adams felt trapped and sick. He tried closing his eyes but the images had already violated his consciousness, growing as quickly in darkness as they did in light. How antiseptic the ravaged city was by comparison; none of the human horror remained except on film. The salutary effects of time were now impossible. Memory could no longer distort the past and dull the pain. The burning questions he had sought to answer upon

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his return to America so many years ago were finally resolved. All that seemed to exist was the torture and murder of naked and innocent people. Brady had mercifully spared him this revelation but in so doing had perverted his art. His photos were fraudulent, bearing little resemblance to the truth, while the film before Adams spoke everything of the reality of war.

Jackson had more films, many more films and documents than Adams could separate and analyze. As quickly as the modern historian gathered the facts together in some meaningful form, someone emptied a new sack of details on his desk, confuting his every conclusion. It seemed impossible to arrive at any truth in the midst of such a Niagara of facts. Seventy years ago he had visited sealed archives and discovered the truth about his own history, a truth that was not fluid but bounded by the finite set of historical data gathering dust in airless vaults. Jackson and his staff had collected for presentation no fewer than two million pieces of data and held as many more in reserve. The trial itself could become a sort of twilight history, an endless recitation of the events of the past superimposed on the present, strangling a creative future in the dead weight of accumulated fact. From Adams's vantage point in December it appeared as if the trial would run on forever—the new dynamo.

Goering, in his fashion, recognized the futility of the trial. Certain from the outset that he faced the gallows, he lectured the court on the inadmissibility of evidence, insisting that, stripped of its total context, a dead body, a witness's testimony, or a strip of film proved nothing. His innocence transcended such facts. Let the court reconstruct the entire context and then, perhaps, an honest verdict could be reached. Adams felt a certain admiration. Goering, for all his pomposity, understood what Jackson and his staff were unwilling to admit: that no matter how many documents were presented to the court, the whole picture would forever escape them. The more evidence they presented, the clearer it became that vast fields of facts eluded them, facts central to their understanding fully the Nazi era. With Hitler dead, no amount of labor could reassemble the past. Hans Frank had opened his testimony with the remark that since Hitler had left no final statement to the German people and the world, the reason for the war would forever elude them. In a culture that had traded individual thought for complete freedom from moral law, where the energy of the body substituted for the intellectual processes of the mind, making all acts permissible, the disappearance of the Fuehrer meant the loss of the only mind in Germany capable of reconstructing events. The dynamo provided current; wires transmitted its energy. The conductors knew nothing of generation, only transmittance. Once the dynamo ceased to turn, the wires reverted back to zero potential, resembling only in form their previous state. From a great and awful power the German people had reverted to a lifeless mass that forgot its energetic past as soon as the current ceased to flow.

Hess, for all his madness, was a seer. While history collapsed about their ears he found his reality in novels. More than once he stunned the court by bursting into hysterical laughter while reading. The only truth left for him was fiction. It at least was fixed and immutable. History knew no such constancy, and Adams began to weaken under the strain of its constant oscillations. All his energies were devoted to trying to keep afloat in a sea of uncertainty. His incidence of near fainting had increased to the extent that he decided to absent himself from the trial, returning, perhaps, for the verdict and sentencing—if he lived that long.

On December 20th Adams boarded the Calais train and headed for England. Already much of the work begun since the armistice had been completed. The temporary bridge he had used to cross the Rhine had already been removed and the old one restored. America worked with an energy that put the Reich to shame.

Several days before he had left Nuremberg, the prosecution had presented as evidence the shrunken head of a concentration-camp victim, blackened and withered, mounted on a slab of oak like a trophy. Its mouth was open in a perpetual scream. To Adams that head was symbolic of a perished world howling silently, mournfully, for a culture beyond recall. What had happened to the Third Reich and the Europe of his past? Moving like anti-history a people had steamrollered over a continent and then suddenly contracted into extinction. Of the six million Nazis wanted for trial only a handful had been discovered. What had happened to the rest? A race of supermen had dissolved with only a faint trace of white chalk to mark their passing. They had created the death camps and destroyed the Old World but it was America and its tribunal that were burning the deed into consciousness. Between these two monoliths the shrunken head shrieked.

## II

In the late August heat he rode south, no more certain of his reasons for return than of his initial desire to journey to Nuremberg. Reading the newspapers and dispatches in the serenity of his friend Charles Gaskell's ancestral home, as he had during the Civil War, the trial had seemed unreal, like the fantastic threads of his own bitter musings. Photographic images had fused with nightmarish fantasy and then had melted away in the wake of his host's warm hospitality. A world war, seemingly the most palpable of events, leaving no corner of life unchanged, was ultimately the most elusive.

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Or so it seemed from the vantage of deep green Yorkshire shrubbery. Every time he tried to force his attention to a review of his experience, the near past fused with analogues from his distant past, transforming all history into an elaborate symbol of personal failure. As if to reinforce this confusion, the journey south mocked his memory. Restored towns and country houses belied the vast stretches of ruin that had lined the tracks less than a year before. The newspapers had ceased reporting the daily events of the trial, as if in conspiracy with the workers of progress. Except for an occasional sputtering on an inside page, more fitting for a dying theatrical than an international tribunal, the papers and their audience had lost interest in history. He had given much thought before deciding to return for the final verdict and sentencing, but his actions defied reason. At best he could claim a certain comfort in seeing the infinite complexities of history reduced to the simplest Puritan equation of sin and punishment. The illusion of moral progress would solace his weary mind. Secretly, however, he held out hope for that simple, illuminating, all-encompassing explanation of the last twenty years of madness. He could pat himself on the back for a certain insight into the sine waves of historical energy, but he could not establish the link between that energy, and the mind of man. Perhaps the innocence of insanity would provide such insight—that is, if Hess could be brought to recognize that his molting time was over.

No one, as yet, had confronted the why. The great German beast had devoured not only Europe but its own people; Adams wondered, to what purpose? America had been drawn into the rapidly expanding vacuum until its overpowering presence exploded the dynamo from within. The effect had been to change the course of American expansion and perhaps entangle it forever with a world it had grown up in reaction to.

As the earth hurtled off into the greater darkness, Adams took his former seat in the rear of the courtroom, hoping to find, in the final statements of the defendants, some clue as to the why. One by one the twenty-one defendants made their short closing speeches. Each reasserted his innocence before God, secure in the belief that the Supreme Being would judge him justly and proclaim him innocent regardless of the decision of the ill-conceived tribunal. With each passing defendant Adams's disappointment grew; then Albert Speer entered the dock. The short, balding minister of armaments began speaking in a language from Adams's own past. "It was the first dictatorship," the Nazi said, "in this period of modern engineering capable of subduing its own people by the fullest use of technical means. Every country in the world now stands in danger of being terrorized by technical means." Adams did not have to try to assimilate Speer's words, they slipped as easily into his consciousness as if they had originated there. "The more technical the world becomes, the more necessary is the demand for individual freedom and independent thought of the individual as a counterweight. The next war. . . ." The next war, Adams repeated. This man was a consummate realist, warning America of its inevitable fate and using Adams's own terms. "An atomic rocket, operated perhaps by only ten men, may be able to destroy a million people in the center of New York within seconds. *Science* will be able to spread disease among men." Adams's own personification of that most potent and deadly force in history, perhaps history itself, rose up like the specter of death. "Nothing," Speer concluded, "prevents unfettered science and engineering from completing the work of destruction upon mankind." Such had been Adams's conclusion almost thirty years ago. Man was indeed "run away with" and the awesome new power of America filled him with a darker foreboding than any aspect of recent history.

With Hess's statement the trial assumed its final amorphous shape. With a kind of poetic lunacy, the madman insisted that he had done no wrong and that he would, if given the chance, repeat his life to the letter. This, from a man who claimed to remember nothing of his past, was the perfect signature for the trial. It made no difference if his madness was feigned, he spoke the truth for all of them. Even with the knowledge of failure and certain death they would all relive their past. If Hess was indeed unable to recall the events leading up to his flight to England, then the wish to live his life over was either a plea for the chance to understand the backward abyss into which he and his nation had fallen or, more likely, an eloquently obtuse statement of the essential unknowableness of the past. They were all amnesiacs. Already the recent events of the trial had slipped into a shadowy realm of memory which understanding could not penetrate. Adams had spent his life trying to capture and organize his fast-disappearing history but he had to own failure. He had scribbled nervously for decades, hoping to emerge at the end with an eloquent statement of process. The mad Hess was more successful. He had spent the long months of the trial reading and scribbling, absorbed in his own creation. Magically he emerged from his cocoon into the last day of the trial and reversed roles, playing the accuser and berating the tribunal for not asking the right questions. The silent world of his madness burst upon the court with a fury. He talked about his prediction that a mysterious force would cause witnesses and defendants to perjure themselves, a powerful animus capable of forcing men to commit crimes against

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their will. It had not only affected those on trial but an entire nation, including the Fuehrer. Neither the twenty-one defendants nor Hitler was guilty; they could not be said to have wanted to commit such crimes.

The court permitted Hess to rave for twenty minutes and then Sir Geoffrey silenced him. The spell was broken. Hess glared at the court, said, "I do not regret anything. If I were to begin all over again I would act just as I have acted, even if I knew that in the end I should meet a fiery death at the stake," and walked from the courtroom. Sir Geoffrey announced that the court would recess for three weeks to decide the fate of the defendants. While the room cleared, Adams tried to understand the fact that the trial had ended. Somewhere he had expected that it would continue forever. He had traveled several hundred miles for a single day of speeches that expressed the same sense of impotence he had felt all his life. Perhaps Stalin had had the right idea after all.

WHEN THE verdict was reached, Adams was in Manchester. The textile mills he had visited during the Civil War lay in ruins, destroyed by German bombs. On that day, the first of October, he walked for hours through the city musing over the eleven death sentences. Newspapers on the street carried the story but no one in that badly burned city seemed to care.

Venturing into a quarter of the city he had known in his youth, he heard what sounded like a bomb explosion. Several intensely silent moments followed, then sirens and shouting pierced the silence. Nearby a great cloud of gray dust billowed over rooftops. Adams hurried to a narrow street that had been almost completely leveled by bombs more than two years before. A five-story brick boarding house, the only remaining structure, had suddenly collapsed. By the time Adams reached the scene, six bodies lay together on the street. Rescue workers scrambled over the rubble trying to free other victims trapped beneath beams and tons of brick. The house, he learned, had simply given up and crumbled. It was not the first in that city or in the many other English and continental cities that had been bombed. Without any warning the delayed effects of weakened foundations brought the remaining stalwarts to their knees. Potential energy on that small blind Manchester street had finally reached zero and no industrious Americans were waiting to put it all back together again. An old, poorly dressed man asked in a thick cockney not far from Adams: "Who's to blame for this? Who's to pay?" Adams had no answer.

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# The Real T. E. Lawrence

*Elie Kedourie*

DURING his lifetime, and even more so after his death, Colonel T. E. Lawrence, "Lawrence of Arabia," was the subject of a great deal of curiosity and speculation. The literature about him is voluminous and varied, ranging from accounts of his military career during World War I and his political activities afterward, to investigations of his private life, and explanations—sometimes involved and farfetched, and sometimes downright sensational—of his personality and behavior.

The Lawrence corpus—as we may call it—began to be formed almost immediately after the end of the war. It can be said to begin with the popular show which Lowell Thomas put on in 1919 at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and which he called "With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia." Five years later, in 1924, Thomas published *With Lawrence in Arabia,* which also proved to be highly popular, and which made Lawrence a familiar name and a thrilling legend to many more than could have seen the Covent Garden spectacle. Though this was not known at the time, it appears that Lawrence helped Thomas both with his show and his book. Two other works published before World War II were, in their turn, heavily indebted to Lawrence's help and inspiration. They spread the story of his wartime activities in a version which he approved, magnifying the significance of his adventures in the war against the Ottomans, and extolling the originality of his military tactics and doctrine. These books were *Lawrence and the Arabs* by Robert Graves, which came out in 1927, and *"T.E. Lawrence": In Arabia and After* by B. H. Liddell Hart. These two books, written in the one case by a poet and man of letters, and in the other by a notable and influential writer on military topics, would be respectfully received in circles whom Lowell Thomas's productions may not have impressed. Again, after his death, Lawrence's brother, Arnold, edited a symposium, *T.E. Lawrence and his Friends* (1937), in which contributors drawn from various walks of life combined to present an impressive picture of a many-sided, indeed a universal, genius.

But, of course, the most powerful by far of all the accounts which served to establish the received version of Lawrence's life and activities were his own writings: *Revolt in the Desert,* an abridgement of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom,* published in 1927; and *Seven Pillars* itself, which was first issued in a small "subscribers' " edition in 1926, and in a trade edition in 1935, immediately after his death. Both works were instant best-sellers in English and other languages, and *Seven Pillars* indeed continues to sell steadily, to judge by the frequency of its reprints. To these two works we may add Lawrence's *Letters,* published in 1938, which were selected and edited by the well-known writer, David Garnett. Together with *Seven Pillars,* the *Letters* served firmly to establish in the public mind Lawrence's *persona* very much as he himself wished to have it established: a brave and heroic spirit who had championed a downtrodden nationality, and led it brilliantly and victoriously against its oppressors, only to be let down and double-crossed by his own government—a government which, out of greed and cowardice, defaulted on promises solemnly given to the Arabs. This tormented spirit, therefore, out of shame and remorse, gave up a brilliant career, enlisted as a private in the Royal Air Force, and spent the rest of his life in menial and humdrum obscurity, managing, nonetheless, to produce a literary and historical masterpiece.

This, we might say, was Lawrence by Lawrence and his friends. The veracity of all this literature in depicting Lawrence's character, activities, and significance was generally, not to say universally, accepted. This remained the case until the appearance in 1955 of Richard Aldington's *Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Enquiry.* The most important, indeed practically the only, new source which Aldington had at his disposal consisted of a number of letters which Lawrence had addressed to Mrs. Bernard Shaw, which had become available at the British Museum, and in which he disclosed that he had been born out of wedlock, and described the devastating effect which the discovery of this fact had had on his life. Aldington put a great deal of weight on Lawrence's illegitimacy

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(which, though it had been mentioned in print in one or two places, was not then generally known) and on Lawrence's reaction to it, in order to account for Lawrence's public and private conduct.

Such an explanation of Lawrence and his activities was also favored by Anthony Nutting, who served as principal adviser to Sam Spiegel during the production of the film, *Lawrence of Arabia*. In his *Lawrence of Arabia: The Man and the Motive* published in 1961, Nutting took the line that Lawrence's bastardy gave him an assertive personality, and made him want to prove that he was as good as, if not better than, those born in wedlock—hence his vision of himself as a messiah destined to lead the Arabs to salvation. To this psychohistory (as we may now call it) Nutting added another ingredient. In November 1917, Lawrence—according to his own account—was arrested while on a reconnaissance mission in Deraa, then under Ottoman control, and taken to the Ottoman commander. What exactly happened before he was set free the following morning Lawrence left somewhat vague, but he hinted that apart from being savagely beaten, he was also sexually assaulted by, or on the orders of, the commander. This incident left Lawrence—so Nutting argued—a "rabid masochist." His sense of mission was lost "and his motors were henceforth driven by an unvarnished ambition and lust for power."

The explanations which Aldington and Nutting put before us are highly speculative. They depend entirely, in the first place, on Lawrence's own unsubstantiated assertions; but even if we knew, beyond any reasonable doubt, that Lawrence's reactions to his illegitimacy were as he described them, and that he was really arrested, beaten, and sexually assaulted in Deraa, it would still be impossible for us to link these occurrences to his military and political activities. To do so we would require specific evidence showing, for example, that the events of Deraa governed Lawrence's decisions in the conduct of a particular battle, or that the shame of his illegitimacy led him to adopt a particular line in a political negotiation. And such evidence is, of necessity, impossible to obtain. But it is not only Nutting's and Aldington's accounts which these considerations render doubtful and shaky, it is the whole enterprise of psychohistory.

Though Aldington relied heavily on the facts of Lawrence's birth, and on Lawrence's supposed reaction to these facts, his book is by no means concerned only with this issue. Aldington also casts a cold and critical glance over the public events in which Lawrence was involved; and though he did not have at his disposal the documents which have become available with the opening of the archives in the 1960's, he was yet able to throw legitimate doubt on a great many of the incidents connected with the Arab revolt and its aftermath as Lawrence and his friends had depicted them. His book was received with great animosity and indignation. It is said that efforts were made to persuade the publishers to suppress it, and that one of Lawrence's friends wanted to give Aldington a public thrashing. Sir Ronald Storrs, whose voice in the chorus was particularly noticeable, denounced Aldington in a BBC broadcast as a mean and contemptible cad, traducing and maligning a hero who was "a touchstone and a standard of reality." Storrs—and others—also took great exception to Aldington's revealing to the world at large the fact of Lawrence's illegitimate birth, particularly when his mother was still alive.

It is undoubtedly very praiseworthy to preserve and defend the privacy of public figures—and it was, of course, entirely because of his public activities that Lawrence attracted so much attention. But it must be said that Lawrence himself was the first to tincture public affairs with his own private passions, thus inaugurating the dangerous and pernicious fashion which so many of his biographers—and detractors—were to follow.

In the course of expatiating over Aldington's unspeakable malice, Storrs, with haughty contempt, remarked: "To what purpose has this been done? . . . What can be the gratification in attempting to destroy a famous name—an inspiration to youth all over the free world?" Storrs's exalted language in referring to Lawrence as "an inspiration to youth all over the free world" is by no means exceptional. Lawrence seems to have attracted, from the time when his career became generally—albeit inaccurately—known, this kind of extravagant hyperbole. Perhaps the best example of this exaggeration occurs in a sermon preached by the Reverend L.B. Cross, Chaplain of Jesus College, Oxford (Lawrence's own college), at a memorial service held shortly after his death. The sermon drew parallels between Lawrence and Jesus. In both cases, the preacher declared, the period of preparation for their life's work lasted three years; both, again, received similar treatment from society; both were ascetic, and both felt the need to humble themselves before others.

Some thirteen years after the appearance of Aldington's book, such solemn and high-flown sentiments as those expressed by Storrs and Cross came to be viewed in an ironical light as a result of revelations which first appeared in 1968 in the London *Sunday Times*, and which were then substantially incorporated in a book published in 1969 and written by Phillip Knightley and Colin Simpson (the original authors of the articles), *The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia*. According to these revelations, for twelve years, from 1923 to 1935, Lawrence induced a young Scotsman, John Bruce, to give him periodic beatings. These beatings were administered at the orders of a nonexistent uncle, conveyed in letters which Lawrence gave to Bruce—letters which in reality he himself had written. But Bruce, it would

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seem, was not the only one whom Lawrence persuaded to give him beatings. At least two others were also involved, while a third, "a service companion" (as John E. Mack calls him in his recent biography, of which more below), was asked by Lawrence to witness the beatings, at the request of the mythical uncle, in order that he might report to him on Lawrence's reactions. According to this observer the beatings were administered with a metal whip on the bare buttocks, and Lawrence required the beatings to be "severe enough to produce a seminal emission."

These beatings and the bizarre arrangements associated with them had become known to Lawrence's family and friends immediately after his death. We learn from *The Secret Lives* that Mrs. Bernard Shaw interviewed Bruce in 1935 in a solicitor's office and asked him to refrain from publishing what he knew. As in the case of the facts relating to his birth, this attempt to protect Lawrence's privacy is natural and entirely laudable. On such matters the only seemly thing for those involved is absolute silence. But some might find surprising that his brother and literary executor, Professor Arnold Lawrence, should describe Lawrence's practices in a manner such that uninstructed readers—already fed on Thomas, Graves, Liddell Hart, and *Seven Pillars*—would inevitably be persuaded that Colonel Lawrence was indeed a superhuman being. In a piece published in 1937, Professor Lawrence referred in cryptic words to his brother's craving for flagellation, declaring that his "subjection of the body was achieved by methods advocated by the saints whose lives he had read."

*The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia* originated in John Bruce's story, which the *Sunday Times* purchased from him, but the authors' aim was decidedly more ambitious than the investigation of possibly scabrous revelations. Two years before Bruce's story appeared, British official records relating to World War I were opened to the public, and Knightley and Simpson thought to take advantage of this to examine Lawrence's role in war and politics. It cannot be said that this part of their book is a success. The British records are extremely voluminous and scattered, generated as they had been in a great many departments and agencies, and it is clear from *The Secret Lives* that the authors did not examine them with the necessary meticulousness—or perhaps did not have the time or leisure to examine, ponder, and make sense of this difficult material. Their account, therefore, of Lawrence's public career—which, after all, is the only reason for any interest in him—is uncritical and unsatisfactory. Here, the authors take for granted certain received ideas about British policies during and after the war; they are too ready to assume that the British broke promises and behaved shabbily toward the Arabs; and they have a tendency to pounce on a document and wrench it out of context simply because it seems to make a sensational revelation. Knightley and Simpson were privileged to have access to one source, namely, the collection of Lawrence's letters and papers at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which is closed to the public until the year 2000. The conditions of their access to the collection are not clear, but the authors do say that apart from giving permission to quote letters, and some amendment of material which originally appeared in the *Sunday Times,* Professor Arnold Lawrence gave no assistance in the writing of the book. This would seem to imply that Professor Lawrence wished to keep his distance from *The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia.*

This manifestly is not the case with the longest and most comprehensive biography of Lawrence to appear so far, *A Prince of Our Disorder,** which came out in 1976. Its author, John E. Mack, refers to and often quotes copiously from the Bodleian Library material and acknowledges Professor Lawrence's help at many points in his narrative. But this is not to say that Mack's work is the official or authorized biography. Such a work is now in preparation and has been entrusted to J. M. Wilson. Mack is by profession a psychiatrist, but his biography of Lawrence is by no means a psychohistory, though he does on occasion have recourse to a psychoanalytical explanation of his hero's character and some of his activities. These explanations are not very convincing, but it is not by them that his work has to be judged. Like any other biography, its merits depend on the author's ability to show that he has used all the available evidence, and that he has made use of this evidence persuasively and cogently—that, in short, he has painted a lifelike picture.

MACK's book is very long—over five hundred pages of text and footnotes. And, in keeping perhaps with its length, it bears a grandiose title: a prince Mack proclaims Lawrence to be, a prince of our disorder. The appellation Mack takes from an essay on Lawrence by Irving Howe which purports to investigate the "problem of heroism." The portentous metaphor is no doubt meant to indicate that Lawrence's life and doings are emblems and exemplars of the human condition. This seems to be Mack's belief, for he tells us that Lawrence's case is particularly important to the "psychologically minded biographer," because "to a varying degree we all share some of his characteristics." Compared to the magniloquence of the title, the cautious and elastic qualifications at first sight disappoint, let down. But in truth it was prudent of Mack to retreat from the wide claim made by his title, for after all it is not true that Lawrence's "disorder" afflicts all of humanity: we do not all, as adults, feel ourselves to be deceivers because we were deceived as children—if indeed this is what happened to Lawr-

* Little, Brown, 561 pp., $15.00.

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ence, as Mack obscurely claims; we are not all flagellants; nor are we all compelled, as again Mack says Lawrence was compelled, to live out the demands of our inner life in the public domain.

Mack is not the only writer to endow Lawrence and his misadventures with a universal, a cosmic, significance. A recent work, *Lawrence of Arabia: The Literary Impulse* by Stanley and Rodelle Weintraub (1975), claims that to dismiss Lawrence (as Herbert Read had done) as "an uneasy adventurer," "an Oxford graduate with a civilian and supercilious lack of discipline," "a mind not great with thought, but tortured by some restless spirit that drives it out into the desert, to physical folly and self-immolation," is to dismiss not so much Lawrence as the 20th century. To identify the 20th century—such as it is—with these particular characteristics smacks of the extravagance to which so many writers on the subject of Lawrence are driven.

In keeping with his view of Lawrence as an exemplar and an archetype, Mack adopts toward his hero a solemn and reverential tone. With meticulous detail he chronicles the events of Lawrence's infancy and childhood: how he was breast-fed for at least a year; how early in his second year he had to be rescued from a high window ledge, which he had reached by climbing over a sewing machine; how as a child he ate chiefly porridge and bananas, while as an undergraduate he liked cakes and fruits; and how on a walking tour in Brittany he carried two pairs of socks and wore one pair. Mack goes to great trouble in order to guide us through the adventures of the boy Lawrence, dressed in his blue-and-white striped jerseys, expatiating on the excitement, humor, and sense of delightful mischief which he inspired in his playmates; he has even tracked down and recorded the testimony of "the only girl to my knowledge to pass under the city of Oxford in a punt with Lawrence." This hagiographical style —as it may fairly be called—is the outcome of Mack's clear conviction that by 1914 (when Lawrence was twenty-six years old) his subject had proved himself to be an "unusual, versatile, and reasonably well-balanced genius." It has to be said that, unless it is seen with the eyes of faith, the material which Mack puts before us warrants no such judgment. At twenty-six Lawrence had shown himself to be a lively, spirited, and intelligent young archeologist—but one who, whatever his promise, had yet to make his mark. And he was assuredly not the only young man of promise in his generation, nor the only such young man subsequently to make his mark.

As it happened, he made his mark not in archeology but in war and politics and, as has been said earlier, it is what he did in this sphere which entitles him to our notice. This Mack in part explicitly recognizes when he says that the years 1917-18—the two years of Lawrence's participation in the Arab revolt in the Hijaz, led by Sharif Hussein, against the Ottoman Turks—were the most critical of Lawrence's life, and the two hundred pages and more which the book devotes to the period 1914-22 also constitute an implicit acknowledgment of this. But these pages, which are the core of the book, are also what is least satisfactory in it. For extensive as are the sources which Mack has used, they are not nearly extensive enough. Between 1916 and 1922 Lawrence was involved in a complex web of war, politics, and diplomacy. For a biographer to give an accurate and intelligible account of his role, he would have to place this role in its proper historical context—and this requires studying and digesting and working into his own narrative the evidence disclosed by the voluminous records which the Sharifian revolt and its aftermath generated in British—and to a lesser extent, in French—archives. No biographer of Lawrence could have done this before 1966, simply because the records were not then available. Knightley and Simpson were the first to explore the new material, but theirs was a hurried and perfunctory foray. It cannot be said that Mack has improved on them to any extent. His footnotes, it is true, do refer here and there to various volumes of Foreign Office and Cabinet documents, but those who know how rich and extensive the public archives of this period are will also know that Mack has, regrettably, done no more than scratch their surface.

This failure to consult and take into account the available evidence, and the reliance on authors who either did not have access to this evidence or who, like George Antonius, are so suspect as to be worthless, have made Mack's historical judgment uncritical and unreliable. If he had attended to the evidence he would, for instance, not have unquestioningly accepted Lawrence's false assertion the the British authorities in Cairo heard of the Sykes-Picot agreement—which embodied Anglo-French arrangements about the postwar fate of Ottoman territories—only in 1917. The truth is that these authorities knew of the provisions of the agreement as soon as it was signed, and furthermore had been kept regularly informed of the progress of the negotiations. Again, Mack uncritically accepts Lawrence's version of the Sharifian revolt and its achievements, saying, for example, that the capture of Aqaba in July 1917—in which Lawrence played a major role —ended the war in Hijaz, made Sinai secure for the British, and provided them with "a vital seaport." The truth is that the capture of Aqaba did not end the war in the Hijaz, where Medina remained under Ottoman occupation until January 1919 and where hostilities between Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud were continually threatening; that Sinai had ceased to be threatened by the Ottomans quite a while before the Sharifian revolt (and that if it had been under Ottoman threat, it was not

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the Sharifian occupation of Aqaba which would have removed this threat); and that Aqaba, an insignificant hamlet on the Red Sea, neither was (nor could have been) a vital seaport for the provisioning of British armies advancing to attack the Ottomans up the Mediterranean coast.

Mack also entertains the bizarre idea that half of General Townshend's force (which the Ottomans besieged and forced to surrender at Kut in Mesopotamia in April 1916) was Arab; however, it is well known that if Arabs fought at all in Mesopotamia, they did so on the side of the Ottomans, or simply to harass and despoil British troops. On this elementary mistake Mack erects a heavy structure of sententious disapproval. The war in Mesopotamia, he tells us, shows "the futility, and ultimately the terrible danger, for *all* the population involved, of a Western power's pursuing its national politics on foreign soil with utter disregard for the nature and political aspirations of the local population." Even if the events which have elicited this comment did actually take place, the comment itself remains eccentric and highly-strung. For, after all, war is not a monopoly of the West. Again, absolutely no warrant exists for the belief that "a local population" pursuing its own "political aspirations" will not suffer disaster; likewise, no warrant exists for denying that a "local population" may derive great benefits from rule by a foreign power—even though such a power is, of course, primarily intent on securing its own interests. It is because such conjunctions are continually arising that Clio may be called an ironic muse: history is not a morality tale in which elevated motives always lead to good results and low motives to bad results.

Mack seems a stranger to this, the oldest and most common worldly wisdom. Hence his ready acceptance of the slick and simplistic cant of the age, and his unconcealed and ready admiration for holy humbugs like Gandhi and Dag Hammarskjöld, to liken Lawrence to whom (he must believe) will elevate his hero in our estimation. The conjunction of these various influences—namely, the neglect of the evidence from the official archives, reliance on the conclusions of indifferent writers, uncritical acceptance of modish slogans and shibboleths—means that situations and episodes which must be at the center of any study of Lawrence are treated inadequately and unsatisfactorily. Thus, for instance, chapter 10 deals with the Hijaz under the Ottomans before and after the outbreak of war, and with the secret Sharifian negotiations with the British; it presents us with a simple story of Arabs yearning for national independence having to contend with Turkish oppression on the one hand and European "colonialist" greed on the other. This simple story is in its simplicity quite deceptive. For the relations between the Ottoman state and its Arabic-speaking subjects cannot be described merely as those between oppressor and oppressed. The Ottoman state was an Islamic state, and Islamic loyalty was a strong bond between rulers and ruled. Apart from the Sharif in the Hijaz (and the small number of Ottoman Arab officers who joined him), the Arabic-speaking provinces remained, in spite of the great wartime hardships, faithful to the empire until the end.

The Sharif, it is true, claimed to be the standard-bearer of Arabism, but this was a mere claim *pro domo,* unwise for the historian to accept as the reality. The reality, rather, was that the Sharif, like many of his predecessors in this post, was tempted to play the overmighty subject, and to exploit the remoteness of the Ottoman state from the Hijaz and the emergency of war. He was, in fact, one power among many in the Arabian Peninsula, the rival and sometimes bitter enemy of fellow Arab rulers. The affair of the deserting Ottoman officers who joined the Sharif is scarcely less complicated. These officers, moved by ideological passions, were the counterpart of the Young Turk officers, the authors of the *coup d'état* of July 1908 against the Ottoman Sultan. Together with the Young Turks, they may be considered an ominous manifestation of a new style of Middle Eastern politics which has since become quite familiar.

Mack's pages are innocent of these and similar complexities; nor do they convey to us a sense of the international context in which the Sharifian rebellion took place—of the traditional great-power connections and rivalries in the Middle East, or of the need of the powers (entirely as legitimate as that of the Sharif) to secure and preserve for themselves a strong position in the area. And what has been said about the deficiencies of Mack's account of the background of the Sharifian rebellion holds equally true of his perfunctory chapters dealing with the Paris Peace Conference and with Lawrence at the Colonial Office. The Peace Conference was a negotiation. The duty of the historian is to set out the interests of the various parties and describe how the bargaining proceeded, not to make question-begging and sentimental assertions such as that "Lawrence was one of the few voices of conscience" in Paris—as though the Sharifian interest had some transcendental merit denied to other interests, and as though the upholders of these other interests were conscienceless, rapacious sharks. Similarly, the policy which Lawrence supported and applied at the Colonial Office was, like any other policy, based on a medley of calculations and miscalculations; it is far from clear that its consequences were so excellent that his biographer must complacently endorse Lawrence's view that his part of "the Middle East job" was "on the whole, well done."

THERE is, of course, one other aspect of Lawrence's public life which a biographer must take into account, namely his mili-

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tary activities in the Hijaz and Trans-Jordan. For it is these which became the foundation of his renown, not to say his legend. That he was resourceful and imaginative in leading Bedouin guerrillas, that he showed endurance and bravery in his activity, cannot be gainsaid. But the claims which he, and others on his behalf, made go much further than this. Liddell Hart, and now Mack, speak as though it were Lawrence who had invented the technique of guerrilla warfare. Mack, for instance, claims that Lawrence was "decades ahead of his time and his government" in understanding the actualities of guerrilla warfare. This is an absurd exaggeration since, as is well known and as has been extensively documented anew in Walter Laqueur's recent book on the subject, both the practice and the theory of guerrilla warfare are appreciably older than Lawrence. Lawrence himself spoke as though he had invented a bloodless way of winning battles. In the introductory chapter to *Seven Pillars,* he boldly affirms that the defeat of the Ottoman empire "was at last done in the wisdom of Allenby with less than four hundred killed, by turning to our uses the hands of the oppressed in Turkey." This exorbitant gasconade, worthy of Tartarin or Falstaff, is particularly piquant coming from someone who so much disliked professional soldiers.

This estimate of the efficiency of guerrilla warfare—which the long and difficult war between the Allies and the Ottomans serves to show up for the empty boast that it is—was combined with a doctrine which Lawrence held, at any rate in his early days in the Hijaz. He seems to have believed that what was going on in the Hijaz was much more than a *fronde* among often dissident tribesmen—a *fronde* being shrewdly made use of by an ambitious magnate. In a dispatch from the Hijaz of October 1916, Lawrence wrote:

> The Bedouin of the Hijaz is not, outwardly, a vehicle for abstract or altruistic ideas. Yet again and again I have heard from them about acts of the early Arabs or things that the Sharif and his sons have said, which contain nearly all that the exalted Arab patriot would wish. They intend to restore the Sheria, to revive the Arabic language, and to rebuild the prosperity of the country. They believe that by liberating the Hijaz they are vindicating the rights of *all* Arabs to a national political existence. . . .

The sequel was to show that these were far-fetched ideas, that the Bedouins remained what they ever had been—simply nomads who lived, whenever they could, by exaction and plunder. Lawrence's doctrine about them justifies us in calling him the Che Guevara of the Arab revolt; but, fortunately for him, he did not have to pay the price which Guevara paid for his fancies about the Bolivian peasants.

The doctrine also indicates that Lawrence in Arabia held simple and uncritical views on politics, views commonly described as "radical," or "anti-imperialist." Thus, in the introductory chapter of *Seven Pillars,* he declares that British soldiers, "young, clean, delightful fellows" were sent "to the worst of deaths, not to win the war, but that the corn and rice and oil of Mesopotamia might be ours." This is no more than the Hobsonian-Leninist notion that it is "capitalism" which causes war. These "anti-imperialist" sentiments remained with Lawrence after he enlisted as a private in the Royal Air Force. While serving in India, he informed Mrs. Shaw that "no native troops are loyal to their foreign masters: or rather, only those who had no self-respect would be loyal." This harsh verdict on the rank-and-file of the Indian army was an ideologue's verdict, both presumptuous and unjust: the Indian army under its British officers remained to the end in its overwhelming majority faithful to the British crown, and its men, whose lives were molded and given significance by loyalty to their regiments, are not to be dismissed, with injurious ignorance, as shifty and despicable traitors.

But whatever Lawrence's activities in the war and its aftermath, their actual import and significance is dwarfed by the retrospective account of his doings which he provided in *Seven Pillars,* and by the immense influence which this writing has exercised. For many years, Lawrence's friends and admirers pitched the merits of his writings very high indeed. To take one example, the *Times Literary Supplement* has recently revealed that it was Lawrence's patron and friend, D.G. Hogarth, who anonymously reviewed in its pages *Revolt in the Desert* when it appeared in 1927. Hogarth, we find, ends his review by affirming that "the book leaves from first to last an impression of absolute truth." Hogarth, who was as deeply involved in the Arab revolt as Lawrence himself, should have known better. It was this kind of glorification, repeated over the years *ad nauseam,* which no doubt led Aldington to speak somewhat unkindly of what he called the Lawrence Bureau.

Lawrence's most recent admirers have been more circumspect, less sweeping and categorical, in their praises. In their book mentioned above, the Weintraubs explain that though Lawrence "exaggerated and even invented some of the details in his narrative," this only serves to establish "his flair as a writer." Lawrence, they tell us, was simply engaged in "transmuting autobiographical chronicle into legend"; and, "despite its confessed inexactitude and subjectivity, it *is,*" they insist, "a work of history—a work which has the poetry of history." Mack, for his part, advances a number of explanations for what he describes as "distortions and partial truths" in *Seven Pillars.* He tells us in one place that their purpose is either embellishment "for dramatic purposes," or the protection of other people. In another place

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he claims that "the distortions and inaccuracies result from Lawrence's need to elevate the tale to epic proportions and to make himself a contemporary legendary figure." Again, he explains that Lawrence's "tendency to fictionalize his experiences, to turn his life into a legend, was most prominent when Lawrence was feeling particularly troubled in his self-regard. At these times," Mack's diagnosis runs, "he would give way to an unconscious need to create a fictional self, drawn on lines of childish heroism, to replace the troubled self he was experiencing." In yet another passage, Mack invites us to consider Lawrence's literary labors as so many attempts to overcome the "continuing effects of traumatic experiences." Since these writings were meant to reach the public, Mack also invites us to look upon Lawrence as a benefactor—albeit an unwitting one—of the cause of mental health: "He would be glad, I am sure," Mack solemnly opines, "if his public self-exposure could contribute to human understanding and to the relief of suffering. He would, I am quite certain, want others to benefit from any knowledge or insights gained from studying and analyzing the struggles he could not resolve altogether for himself."

On the face of it, *Seven Pillars* is simply the account of a wartime episode. It requires some ingenuity to turn it into a myth, or a neurotic's confession requiring the analyst's transformative logic, to unlock its esoteric meaning and unveil its hidden significance. But whatever the analyst's skill, it is difficult to see *Seven Pillars* as a myth, like Gilgamesh or Prometheus or Oedipus. And if the book is a piece of self-exposure, the maunderings of a neurotic on his psychoanalyst's couch, it is not clear why it should benefit humanity at large: at the most the benefit will accrue to the patient himself and to his doctor. All this laborious huffing and puffing, in short, sounds uncommonly like apologetics—which are necessary, since the fact cannot be got over that at certain points, some of them crucial, *Seven Pillars* is knowingly and deliberately untruthful. Lawrence, for instance, knew that Faysal, third son of the Sharif of Mecca, whose champion he became, was a timid, perhaps even a cowardly, man in battle, and lacking in judgment, and yet he portrayed him in *Seven Pillars* as a heroic figure, "the leader who would bring the Arab revolt to full glory." He chose to disguise the truth because—as he later told Liddell Hart—it was "the only way to get the British to support the Arabs—physical courage is an essential demand of the typical British officer." This may have been a necessary—albeit questionable—proceeding when Lawrence was acting as Faysal's champion. To perpetuate the deception in a work later composed at leisure is to take advantage of the reader's good faith. But perhaps the most flagrant example of this abuse is Lawrence's account of the fall of Damascus. The reader of *Seven Pillars* is led to believe that the city was captured by Faysal's forces, when the truth was—as Lawrence well knew—that on Allenby's orders all Allied forces were forbidden to enter Damascus, only Faysal's being allowed to do so, and thus—falsely—to claim its capture.

LAWRENCE'S book, we may then fairly say, is a corrupt work, which deliberately sets out to induce in its readers—by means of falsehoods—feelings of admiration, pity, indignation, and guilt, in respect of events which in reality do not possess that tragic quality for which such emotions are appropriate. The political and military events in which Lawrence was mixed up, and which in his fashion he later recounted, involved conflicting interests and ambitions, no single one of which was, however, particularly righteous or signally elevated. *Seven Pillars* pretends to the contrary, and by transforming the mediocre and the shady into noble and exalted beings, the book is not only corrupt but also corrupting—corrupting in a manner particularly familiar to the modern age, when political causes have come to be endowed with transcendental significance, to warrant the greatest sacrifices and justify the most heinous crimes. This kind of corruption may properly be called romantic, since it rests on yearning for a harmonious or paradisaical existence to be established or regained by means of political action.

Evidence of such romanticism is abundant in Lawrence's writings. Consider, for instance, the dedicatory poem which stands at the beginning of *Seven Pillars*. It is not known for sure to whom the poem is dedicated, but such evidence as exists points to Dahoum, a donkey boy who was employed on the diggings at Jerablus, and with whom Lawrence established a close relationship. But whatever the identity of the person to whom the poem (and the book) is dedicated, the poem itself is clearly erotic. It begins: "I loved you," and its third stanza constitutes a typically romantic amalgam in which love and death are simultaneously and nostalgically evoked:

> Love, the way-weary, groped to your body, our
> brief wage ours for the moment
> Before earth's soft hand explored your shape,
> and blind worms grew fat upon
> Your substance.

Not only is this love poem—memorial of a private relationship—made to stand at the head of a book dealing with public events, but it is also itself made to affirm that the writer's actions in war and politics were motivated by a desire to give pleasure to the loved one. The first stanza reads:

> I loved you, so I drew these tides of men into
> my hands
> and wrote my will across the sky in stars
> To earn you Freedom, the seven-pillared worthy
> house,
> that your eyes might be shining for me
> When we came.

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We may add that the poem, as it figures in *Seven Pillars,* was amended and toned down by Robert Graves, and that Lawrence's original version—as Knightley and Simpson show in their book—was palpably more explicit. It is all very peculiar.

Equally peculiar is the fact that while Lawrence's biographers have speculated a great deal on the identity of the person to whom it is dedicated, they have seldom paused to consider the significance of what the bare text of the poem so revealingly discloses about Lawrence's attitude to politics and public affairs. The poem, and other statements by Lawrence, indicate that he was perhaps homosexually inclined. Mack quotes a passage from some unpublished notes made for a projected autobiography in which Lawrence declares: "I take no pleasure in women. I have never thought twice or even once of the shape of a woman: but men's bodies, in repose or in movement—especially the former, appeal to me directly and very generally." Side by side with this disgust for the female sex went hatred for generation and childbirth which, he told Mrs. Bernard Shaw, was "so sorry and squalid an accident . . . if fathers and mothers took thought before bringing children into this misery of a world, only the monsters among them would dare to go through with it." Such an outlook, so much at variance with the common experience of mankind, has for its corollary a view of politics in which are entirely absent those aims usually held to justify political activity —namely, the preservation and perpetuation of a human group. Hence perhaps Lawrence's occasionally wild and nihilistic outbursts, such as this one which occurs toward the end of *Seven Pillars*: "To the clear-sighted, failure was the only goal. We must believe, through and through, that there was no victory except to go down in death fighting and crying for failure itself."

In the dedicatory poem which inaugurates *Seven Pillars,* Lawrence boasts that "I drew these tides of men into my hands and wrote my will across the sky in stars." Here the self, by a sheer exercise of will, claims to master the world. In *The Mint,* which consists of sketches describing his life as an enlisted man in the Royal Air Force, Lawrence's attitude is the very opposite. The self is now wholly mastered by the world, governed by abject fear which, however, is perhaps as pleasurable as absolute domination: *les extrêmes se touchent.* He writes: "The root-trouble is fear: fear of failing, fear of breaking down." And: "My soul, always looking for some fear to salt its existence, was wondering what seven whole years of servitude would do against the hasty stubbornness which had hitherto buttressed my values." Having, in his search for a superhuman harmony, attempted (and failed) to soar to the heights, he would now seek the ineffable by immersing himself in a bovine existence where "unquestioned life is a harmony": "here are men so healthy that they don't chop up their meat into mince for easy digestion by the mind: and who are thereby intact as we are thereby diseased." Therefore, deliberately, now preferring his world "backwards in the mirror," Lawrence abandoned himself to the "urge downwards, in pursuit of the safety which can't fall further." It did not work: *qui veut faire l'ange,* as Pascal said, *fait la bête*; but not vice versa.

Lawrence's record, then, shows bravery in war, a great capacity for physical endurance, ingenuity as a guerrilla leader, and later some literary talent. But it also shows that he was self-centered, mercurial, and violently unstable. In his concluding chapter Mack notes that Lawrence "sought *new possibilities* for the self." But this cannot redound to his praise, as Mack evidently means it to do. For these possibilities and the quest for them can be mischievous and even catastrophic. So in Lawrence's case they have proved to be—not only in his own restless and unhappy life, but also in the example which he set, and which his legend (which he took such care to put together and to promote) made immensely popular. Mack's further verdict, that Lawrence was a civilizing force, cannot therefore stand. The cause of Arab nationalism which he embraced (and which he falsely claimed to have been double-crossed and betrayed by his country) was not more virtuous or worthy than any similar cause. Why a foreigner should so fervently embrace it, and what it has contributed to civilization, are both quite obscure. Lawrence, on the other hand, promoted a pernicious confusion between public and private, he looked to politics for a spiritual satisfaction which it cannot possibly provide, and he invested it with an impossibly transcendental significance. In doing so, he pandered to some of the most dangerous elements to be found in the modern Western mentality. His influence and his cult, here at their most extensive and enduring, we may judge to be not civilizing, but destructive.

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# Portrait of a Prodigy

*Samuel Lipman*

In April 1929, a twelve-year-old violinist made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic playing three concerti—Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms—accompanied by Bruno Walter. At the end of the concert the already immortal Albert Einstein rushed to the artists' room via the stage, embraced the boy, and cried: "Now I know there is a God in heaven!"

The boy was Yehudi Menuhin, and this Berlin performance was by no means his first sensation. Seventeen months before, he had played the Beethoven concerto in New York with Fritz Busch and the New York Symphony. After the concert, the New York *Times* critic, Olin Downes, who had wanted to attend a prizefight at Madison Square Garden that night rather than hear a violin prodigy, found himself drafting a review that in its uncontrolled excitement and enthusiasm seemed too strong to be deserved by any child; the review he finally wrote began with restrained comments about Menuhin's "exceptional musical intelligence and sensitivity," his conveying "very beautifully the poetry of the slow movement," his "refreshing taste and simplicity" in the finale. But then Downes, unable to contain himself, opened up:

> It would seem, therefore, that the object ordinarily loathed by reviewers and serious lovers of music—the infant prodigy—is not a myth. . . . It seems ridiculous to say that he showed a mature conception of Beethoven's concerto, but that is the fact. Few violinists of years and experience known to this public have played Beethoven with as true a feeling for his form and content. . . . A boy of eleven [has] proved conclusively his right to be ranked, irrespective of his years, with outstanding interpreters of this music.

Today that boy is a man past sixty, rich in honors, fortune, and musical experience. He continues to play widely, if not as frequently as in the past. Nevertheless, his public performances are guardedly evaluated even by his friends; press comment, though frequently too overawed by the historical ring of his career to urge his retirement, still makes clear that his playing days—at least in concert—are or will soon be over. Yet his records, among them many recent ones of demanding compositions—only this past spring, an authoritative new recording of the Delius concerto was issued[1]—continue to sell; and to the available discs of his adult performances are increasingly being added LP reissues of those 78 RPM records which remain documents of the time when he was the infant wonder of the entire musical world.

All this, and the years before his first triumphs as well as the entire period between the beginning and the now inevitable end of his public career, are described by Menuhin in his just published memoirs, *Unfinished Journey*.[2] The book is at once painfully pretentious, only intermittently interesting, marred by platitudes and overfine writing, yet withal often profoundly moving and revealing. For what Menuhin illuminates in writing about his life is the extent to which a true prodigy is born old and yet remains a child forever in search of that original maturity. His writing, here as elsewhere, is an only partially witting account of that search, the degree to which it remains unsuccessful, and the miracle of completeness from which it started.

Yehudi Menuhin was born in New York City in 1916, the first child of parents whose intelligence was exceeded only by the strength of their will. Moshe and Marutha (Sher) Menuhin, still alive today in very old age, were themselves born in Russia, he in the middle of the Jewish Pale of Settlement, and she in the Crimea near Yalta. Because of the pogroms they separately went to Palestine, and then again separately to New York, where they married. Moshe was descended from Hasidic rabbis; after religious and secular studies in Palestine (and attendance at NYU on a mathematics scholarship), he ended up teaching Hebrew school to support his wife and family. His wife, who feels herself a product of Tatar Khans, also worked both before and after her marriage as a Hebrew teacher. Their involvement with Hebrew was totally secular, and in the case of Moshe was accompanied by an anti-religious attitude which was later to broaden into a venemous anti-Zionism.

When their son was born he was named Yehudi—the Hebrew word for Jew—as a sign, paradoxically, that he was "Everyman, evoking no model and continuing no line." His first years were spent in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where the father found it impossible to get along in the religious atmosphere surrounding the Talmud Torah in which he taught. California—the eternal land of opportunity—beckoned, and Yehudi with his parents (whom he called by the Hebrew words for mother and father, *abba* and *eema*) arrived in San Francisco in 1918, there to begin a quick rise to fame and riches.

The adult Menuhins did not

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[1] Angel S-37262.

[2] Knopf, 393 pp., $12.50.



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simply give their thoughts and hopes—in the fashion of so many immigrant parents—to Yehudi and to a lesser extent to his younger (and also musically talented) sisters, Hephzibah and Yaltah; these parents devoted their energies entirely to the children, educating, disciplining, and supporting them as if they were already the royal family of music. From the age of two Yehudi was taken to hear the San Francisco Symphony; it was at one of these performances, when he was three, that he first noticed and was smitten by the concertmaster, Louis Persinger, playing the violin. Persinger—a great violinist, talented pianist, and the most significant American teacher of the violin during the second quarter of this century—was approached, but he refused Yehudi as a student because he had no interest in teaching a beginner. A year marking time with a man who, according to Menuhin, taught him nothing, at least produced the feeling that the violin was no longer a foreign object but rather a natural extension of his body. Then—at five—he again went to Persinger; this time he was accepted, and at his first lesson Persinger played a Bach slow movement for the little boy and his mother. Initiated into sublimity, Yehudi went home drunk on music.

From this point on his progress with the violin was so rapid as to seem effortless; and it was certainly astounding:

> Not yet eight years old, I had already learned various "student" concerti . . . , the Bach Sonata in G minor, which had sealed with glory Persinger's first lesson, the Mendelssohn concerto, Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, the first movement of Paganini's Concerto in D major, the Tchaikovsky—wolfing down this huge corpus, hair, nails, and all. . . .

He had five lessons a week from Persinger. Several years later, when he was on tour, he was to receive a three-hour lesson every day. Though he did not attend school, he was privately tutored, at first by his parents and then by specialists. The education given him lacked science and mathematics, but it was strong in literature and—perhaps because it was obvious that he would travel widely—languages. No heir to a throne could have lived in an environment more orderly, integrated, and efficient; his regimen was of course centered around the violin, but it allowed time even for play with his sisters and with other children who were brought in for just such a purpose.

His formal debut, when he was still seven, took place early in 1924; his first orchestral appearance, playing the Lalo with Alfred Hertz and the San Francisco Symphony, occurred the next year, followed closely by his first full-length recital in March 1925, a month before his ninth birthday. Persinger now moved to New York, and Yehudi (accompanied by mother and sisters) followed him there. He made his New York debut at the beginning of 1926 in a concert arranged by his hastily summoned father.

From the time he was seven or eight, Yehudi had wanted to study with a touring violinist he had heard in San Francisco, Georges Enesco, a Rumanian who lived in France. The Menuhins had no money to go to Europe, but fortune, in the guise of a Jewish Maecenas, made it all grandly possible. In Sidney Ehrman, himself an amateur violinist and the husband of an immensely wealthy heiress as well, Yehudi found a patron of extraordinary generosity, friendship, and long-term dedication. Ehrman's approaches to the Menuhins were at first rejected, but after he offered to send the whole family to Europe with Yehudi, the parents gave in, and in 1926 they left America for a year in France. There Yehudi laid siege to Enesco, and before long he had become his pupil and even more his disciple and musical son. Menuhin was later to study some months with the third and last of his major teachers, Adolph Busch—the brother of Fritz Busch, the father-in-law of Rudolf Serkin, and one of the significant musician-violinists of the day—but Enesco's combination of romantic freedom and passionate musical seriousness was the greatest single influence on him. He was to remain Enesco's student, except for the time with Busch, at least until 1936.

Meanwhile the boy's performing career had caught fire. His successes in New York and Berlin were followed by similar triumphs in London and in Leipzig, where he played the Mendelssohn concerto at the 1931 celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Gewandhaus orchestra. In addition to these appearances on the concert stage, by the middle 1930's, while still in his teens, he had recorded several concerti, all but one of the Bach unaccompanied works, and a variety of sonatas and less substantial salon pieces.

Much of World War II he spent entertaining American and Allied troops in the European and Pacific theaters. As soon as the war was over, he visited Germany to perform for the inmates of the newly liberated concentration camps. Shortly thereafter he found himself campaigning in the United States for the right of the conductor, Wilhelm Furtwängler, then suspected of Nazi sympathies, to perform again. In this, with the help of the pianist Myra Hess, among others, Furtwängler was successful, and later made a series of important recordings with Menuhin, including performances of the Beethoven,[3] Brahms,[4] Mendelssohn,[5] and (second) Bartok[6] concerti.

In recent years, while continuing to play the violin, Menuhin has also turned his attention to conducting, often recording with an orchestra which bears his name. Among the works he has recorded, demonstrating solid musicianship if not a great deal of conductorial excitement, are the symphonies of Schubert (of which only the "Unfinished" is currently available in this country[7]) and the four orchestral suites of Bach.[8] He has directed several festivals, and perhaps dearest to his heart is the Yehudi Menuhin Music School, which he founded in England—where he now lives permanently—in 1963. His

[3] Seraphim 60135.
[4] Seraphim 60232.
[5] Electrola (Germany) 1C-047-00907.
[6] La Voix de son Maître (France) 2C 053-01322.
[7] Angel S-36609.
[8] Seraphim SIB-6085.

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school, a place where young musicians from the age of seven may come as boarders to combine grammar- and high-school education with rigorous musical instruction, is an attempt to merge the discipline of the musical training he has witnessed on his visits to the Soviet Union with the personal artistic attention and respect for the individual he himself received as a child. In addition to all this, he has associated himself with a variety of extra-musical causes and has as a result become perhaps the most visible of the socially committed musicians of our time.

AN EVALUATION of Yehudi Menuhin must be divided into three parts: the short career of the prodigy; the much longer career of the adult artist; and the influence of the public-spirited citizen he has tried to be. His multitudinous recordings provide the material for a musical evaluation, and his memoirs are a convenient chronicle of his thoughts, pronouncements, and actions on musical as well as other and wider issues.

The tradition of the child prodigy of which Menuhin is a part is an old one, at its highest level limited to a few dazzlingly talented children. Without doubt, the greatest of all musical prodigies was Mozart, whose keyboard performance at eight was described by Johann Christian Bach as beyond "all understanding and imagination"; his early ability at improvisation was astounding and his compositions were remarkable in both quantity and finish. Schubert was also a great composer in his teens; so was Mendelssohn. On the piano Liszt was brilliant as a child, as was Paganini on the violin. Closer to our own time, and restricted almost entirely to the field of performance rather than composition, Josef Hofmann made a sensation at the piano on his 1887 American tour, and coeval with Menuhin's rise were the unhappy prodigy careers of the violinist Ruggiero Ricci and the pianist Ruth Slenczynska.

Of all the performing prodigies of the last century, however, Yehudi Menuhin was the greatest. What marks the playing we can hear on his first recordings[9] (early 1928, when he was twelve) and what must have similarly marked his New York and Berlin debuts, is not simply great ability, unusual promise, and the charming sweetness formerly associated with children. What one hears on these records is fully mature artistry characterized by strong and individual musical personality, rhythmic snap, and complete intellectual integration.

One of these 78 RPM sides—a performance of an anonymous 16th-century gaillarde, with Persinger providing a piano accompaniment at once sensitive, restrained, and masterful—goes far to justify the violin as an absolute value, like the human voice, independent of the distinction of the material performed on it. Indeed, Menuhin's adolescent tone, in its pure warmth and high seriousness, itself carries an emotional punch not characteristic of the tone of any other violinist on records. In his early recordings, and frequently in those he made in the 1930's, one hears a transformation of the gut, metal, and wood of the violin into living speech. This is an achievement beyond training and conscious effort, though it must of course be based on them; it is a laying bare of what in the 19th century would have been called the very essence of song.

One can hear this miracle accomplished again—if perhaps, due to the large scale of the compositions performed, less completely—in two recordings dating from the next year, 1929. In these Menuhin performs the Bach C major unaccompanied sonata[10] and the Beethoven sonata Opus 12 No. 1 for violin and piano.[11] The Bach in particular would be a superb performance at any age; from a boy of thirteen it is unbelievable. Interestingly, Menuhin was to record it twice later, once in 1934, when he was eighteen,[12] and once in the middle 1970's.[13] The most recent recording is disfigured by a cosmetic coat of reverberation applied by engineers more concerned with making a violin sound like an orchestra than with making it sound like a violin. But the 1934 discs are distinguished not only by the musical intelligence and beauty of tone of the older recording; still more than that, they present a monumental musical conception, an obvious gain in pure physical strength, and the greater smoothness produced by the use of a superior violin.

If the Bach recording is the high point of the young Menuhin's playing of formally austere music, the Bruch Concerto in G minor, which he recorded in 1931,[14] is a revelation of the profundity contained in a work which is always treated as a mere showpiece. In the Bruch, his singing of the slow movement, in its wisdom and gravity, testifies to what was perceived by many in his audience as divine grace.

Menuhin as a child was quite aware of his extraordinary endowments and the power they conferred upon him. He now writes simply, without any false modesty:

> Without qualifications, background, or experience, without knowing adolescent yearning, excitement and disappointment, I could at the age of seven or eight play the *Symphonie Espagnole* almost as well as anyone and better than most.

He was able to turn this self-knowledge to good use in the accomplishment of his musical—and career—goals. When at the age of ten he received the invitation to make his New York orchestral debut in a Mozart concerto, he "had a reservation: why Mozart, why not Beethoven? To play in Carnegie Hall was to play Beethoven, to arrive was to arrive." The conductor, Fritz Busch, when told of Menuhin's feelings, retorted: *"Man lasst ja auch Jackie Coogan nicht den Hamlet spielen"*—"One doesn't hire Jackie Coogan to play Hamlet." But Menuhin insisted that Busch

[9] LP transfer on Discopaedia (Canada) MB 1013. Other performances of short pieces, recorded in the early 1930's, may be heard in LP transfers on HMV (England) HLM 7077 and Orion ORS 7271.

[10] HMV (England) DB 1368/70 and also Victor 8830/2 (78 RPM deleted); recently available on a private LP transfer made by Thomas L. Clear, TLC-2581.

[11] HMV (England) DB 1365/7 and also Victor M-91 (78 RPM deleted).

[12] HMV (England) DB 2284/6 and also Victor M-284 (78 RPM deleted).

[13] Angel S-3817.

[14] Available on LP as HMV (England) RLS 718.

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hear him play the Beethoven, and after he finished the opening passages, he writes, "German endearments came raining down on me. '*Mein lieber Knabe,*' he explained, 'you can play anything with me, anytime, anywhere!' "

IT WOULD have been unusual, given the physical and psychological problems of growing up, if this state of perfection had lasted. It did not. In his book he speaks of the breakup of his violin playing as paralleling the breakup of his first marriage; another and perhaps more profound explanation might reflect on the difficulty an erstwhile child prodigy finds in living without the discipline and support provided by parents and teachers, which is at the same time flattering and so necessary to an immature ego.

But whatever the relationship between his emotional and musical lives, he had, from an early age, recognized the existence of technical problems in his playing. The day after his New York orchestral debut he became aware of involuntary muscular tension in his arms. He could not help realizing increasingly as he grew older that not only his personal life but also his violin playing was "full of holes," his career a destination reached before a proper foundation had been laid.

Perhaps fortunately, he has been concerned with self-analysis all his life. Applied to the violin, the concern to understand and exert conscious control has led him to books, teachers, and in the 1950's to the practice of Yoga as a means of relaxing what must have been otherwise ungovernable tension. This involvement with Yoga began during a 1951 trip to the Orient, and in India he went so far as to engage a guru, who for fifteen years thereafter came to Europe every summer to guide Menuhin's exercises. A predictable corollary to his belief in the value of Yoga is a dedication to an almost completely vegetarian diet and in particular a total avoidance of white sugar and white flour. He finds that this new way of life has deepened his control over the violin beyond what he knew as a child; it is perhaps enough that it has enabled him to continue performing at times when he must have been close to despair.

Be all that as it may, the evidence of his playing difficulties can be heard on the many recordings he has made in his adult life. They are most noticeable, as might be expected, in new recordings of works also done earlier. Such is the case, for instance, with his recent Bruch Concerto in G minor,[15] which he had played so marvelously at fifteen. Comparing the newer recording to the older, one is conscious of a technical stiffness, a kind of clumsiness in getting around the violin, and above all a certain thinning and tightening of his once rich and seemingly easily produced tone. On the other hand, while there can be no doubt of this mechanical decline, the newer recording is redeemed by the nobility and penetration of his conception of the work, qualities lacking today among his younger colleagues. Much the same could be said of his two recordings of the unaccountably neglected Elgar concerto, the first made in 1932 (with the composer conducting)[16] and the second in the middle 1960's.[17]

But Menuhin has not, in the fashion of so many youthful successes, spent his life in an attempt merely to repeat his first triumphs; his repertory is vast and adventurous. He has recorded all the major works for violin and orchestra—with the exception, it seems, of the Sibelius and Tchaikovsky concerti—and several for the viola in addition. He has not shied away from the difficult (and still knotty for the audience) works of Bartók, and he has recently recorded the concerto of Alban Berg with Pierre Boulez.[18] Contenting himself neither with already existing masterworks nor with the minor romantic pieces obligatory for virtuoso violinists, he has commissioned works from such famous composers as Bartók and Ernest Bloch, and from lesser known writers as well. Nor has he restricted himself to the performance of what is normally accepted as serious, "classical" music; successfully appealing to younger audiences, he has in concert and on records attempted to combine Western instrumental performance with Indian artists and their music,[19] and he has recorded, in the form of duets, renditions of 1930's popular songs with the famous jazz violinist Stephane Grapelli.[20]

IT IS likely that some of the same motives and energies which made possible and encouraged his exploration of the violin repertory also turned his attention to social and political issues. In addition to his efforts after World War II on behalf of Furtwängler, Menuhin was early active in arranging for Soviet artists to play in the United States, and he was a vocal supporter of Rostropovich—and Solzhenitsyn—in their battles with Soviet officialdom, battles which to a limited extent Menuhin shared during his 1969-75 term as president of the International Music Council (an offshoot of UNESCO). Similarly, though he had for many years owned a house in Greece, he made public his unwillingness to return to Greece during the Colonels' regime, just as he would not, for a time after 1956, visit Hungary.

But of all Menuhin's positions on non-musical matters, it has been his views and actions in relation to his fellow Jews, and specifically to the state of Israel, which have provoked the most discussion. Already in 1947, on one of his early postwar trips to Germany, he was accused, at a Displaced Persons camp, of being a little too quick in his willingness to forgive the Germans their crimes. In defending himself, he writes that he believed

> insistence on vengeance, excluding all other response, was, however understandable, a weakness. Patriotism cannot be enough if it puts beyond consideration most of the human race. I too was a creature of my experiences, and they had shown me my fellow man the world over, even in Germany.

This statement, both in the burden of tolerance it places on Jews

[15] Angel S-36920.
[16] HMV (England) HLM 7107 (LP).
[17] Angel S-36330.
[18] HMV (England) ASD 2449.
[19] Angel S-36418, S-36026.
[20] Angel S-36968, S-37156.

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and in its demand that they resist what he sees as their own tendencies toward parochialism and exclusionism, is very revealing of Menuhin's idea of what it means to be a Jew. He is obviously proud to be a Jew himself, at least as far as that designation refers to his ancestors. And yet, with that pride goes a marked residue of the opinions of his father, who made no secret of his negative feelings both about the Jewish religion and about Zionism.

Yehudi himself cannot be held responsible for his father's prejudices, but there is evident in his memoirs a profound unease on matters Jewish. It is plain that he regards Israel and the Jewish people with a certain rueful affection, but it is also plain that for him all nationalisms—not least among them the Jewish variety—are oppressive and stifling, blocking the way to that internationalism which is the goal of so many who aspire to decency. He has played many times in Israel and even helped to raise money for charitable organizations there, but at the same time he cannot forbear lecturing Zionists and their sympathizers on their duties toward the Palestinians and their Arab brothers. He is an advocate of Middle Eastern confederation and one suspects that, without fully realizing the consequences, he would welcome the eventual integration of Israel into the surrounding milieu and its disappearance in its present form as a distinctively Jewish state.

Controversial as Menuhin's attitudes toward things Jewish may be, they are entirely consistent with his general stance on world affairs. And this stance, in its pretension to being above ideological struggle, in its assumption of neutrality in the service of the brotherhood of man, in its hope for a new society combining the best features of the socialist and democratic worlds, in its reliance on passive resistance to one's friends and graceful compromise with one's enemies, falls very much within the accepted canon of liberal opinion. If his views have not found acceptance everywhere, from his comfortable position in the center of contemporary morality he can easily enough class the objectors as unconverted souls with whom an extra effort is required.

It is difficult not to see this emphasis on universalism and internationalism, which is so apparent in Menuhin's non-musical public life, as deeply related to, and indeed coming out of, his great performing career. For it is an expression of the logic immanent in such an activity as playing the violin for ever larger and—one hopes—ever more appreciative audiences. A performer does not perform for himself, and still less does he perform for the composer or for some abstract idea of music itself. He performs for people, and the fewer who are *a priori* excluded from his sway, the better. A composer, as an original creator, cannot avoid taking sides and thereby making opponents as he makes adherents; a performer must try to satisfy all audiences and all musics. Thus, performers are perhaps even more tempted than most other people to serve the regnant political, social, and cultural ideas of their day.

Yehudi Menuhin is not to be condemned for such service. But neither is he to be credited—as he so often is—with extraordinary fidelity to the duties of human leadership. It is not as a leader of mankind that he is significant; it is as a violinist and exponent of a great musical literature that he has made his mark, first in a childhood of genius and then in an adult life of solid if less glamorous and overwhelming artistic accomplishment.

# Fiction

## Joan Didion & Her Characters

*John Romano*

Two paradoxes characterize Joan Didion's writing. The first concerns her subject matter. She is drawn to the timely-verging-on-fashionable-verging-on-chic, to film stars and wealthy indolence and the sexuality of power. But unlike most writers who earn a living on the public's hunger for the glamorous, she brings a moral consciousness to bear on these subjects: she is acutely judgmental, vulnerable, and can be shocked. This paradox has prompted some reviewers, in discussing her novel about Hollywood, *Play It As It Lays* (1970), to compare her to Nathanael West. But where West was scolding, Joan Didion is merely grouchy. She gives the impression, particularly in the essays collected in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1970), of having come to judge the *Zeitgeist* but of finding it actually beneath judgment; she is too disgusted even to preach.

The other paradox concerns her way of writing. It balances an objective-seeming precision of language and observed detail against the feeling that a particular person is speaking to us, an intelligent, likable, and utterly subjective, even prejudiced person; and, as it happens, someone who lives in or near a condition of unhysterical despair. In this balance there is an explanation for something that is often said about Joan Didion—that her essays are excellent, whereas her fiction is only just good. In *River Run* and *Play It As It Lays,* personal idiosyncracies overrun the writing, and drench it in desperation; in the essays, with their necesssary

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burden of fact and information, the balance is better kept.

The twin extremes of hopelessness and precision come together in Grace Strasser-Mendana, the narrator of Miss Didion's newest novel, *A Book of Common Prayer.** Grace began as a cultural anthropologist, then married into the leading family of a small country in Central America called Boca Grande. Her in-laws are a debauched and violent crew, jostling each other in and out of political office in bloody but phony revolutions. All of this Grace ignores to the extent that she can, intent instead on the study of biochemistry, which she has taken up in preference to anthropology. Having wearied of the ambiguities of human behavior, she has chosen "a discipline in which demonstrable answers are commonplace and 'personality' absent." The objects of her research are, first of all, cancer, of which she is dying, but also the chemistry of feeling, of character. What happens in *A Book of Common Prayer*, on one level, is that someone named Charlotte Douglas arrives in Boca Grande; that Charlotte turns out to be a person of heartbreaking emotional complexity; and that what is complex and touching and profound about her excites and ultimately overwhelms Grace Strasser-Mendana's will to know, as well as her capacity for knowing.

CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS grew up in the West, "immaculate of history, innocent of politics." As a child she prayed to "a small wooden angel, carved in Austria . . . that 'it' turn out all right, 'it' being unspecified and all-inclusive, and she had been an adult for some years before the possibility occurred to her that 'it' might not." By that time she has married Warren Bogart, who had been her teacher at Berkeley. Warren Bogart is obnoxious, viciously articulate, and a drunkard. He is made up of big, bottomless needs and a powerful sexual charm whose claims on Charlotte seem absolute. After a few years she leaves him, taking with her their daughter Marin. She never frees herself from Warren's enchantment, but she gets married again, in her blank and unperceiving optimism, this time to Leonard Douglas, a San Francisco lawyer internationally famous not only for his representation of left-wing radicals and rock stars in civil-liberties cases, but also as a legal agent in large international arms deals; the contradiction in this double career is almost unnoticeable in the book's dark thicket of cultural-political satire.

With Leonard, Charlotte leads, as Warren puts it, not a life but a "life-style," getting high on marijuana cigarettes that are kept near the bed in a silver box that plays "Puff the Magic Dragon" when the lid is opened. For a while we are in one of those queer, stylish crevices of the 60's counterculture upon which Joan Didion focused such piercing attention in some of the essays in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. But later, when Grace is piecing together the shards of Charlotte's past life, the years while Marin is growing up can hardly be accounted for, so impenetrable is the haze in which Charlotte was then living. "For days at a time her answers to Marin's questions would . . . strike the child as weird and unsettling, cheerful but not quite responsive. 'Do you think I'll get braces in fourth grade?' Marin would ask. 'You're going to love fourth grade,' Charlotte would answer."

But so much is background. Because the events with which the book is properly concerned begin on the morning when FBI agents come to Charlotte with the news that Marin, presumed to be away at school, took part in the bombing of the Transamerica building, hijacked a plane to Utah, and is presently in hiding from the law. Joan Didion does not dwell long on the atmosphere of a media circus that surrounds the search for Marin Bogart. What she does give us is apt and telling:

> A man who described himself as a disillusioned Scientologist called Charlotte to say that Marin was under the influence of a Clear in Shasta Lake. A masseuse at Elizabeth Arden called Charlotte to say that she had received definitive word from Edgar Cayce via Mass Mind that Marin was with the Hunzas in the Himalayas. The partially decomposed body of a young woman was found in a shallow grave on the Bonneville Salt Flats but the young woman's dental work differed conclusively from Marin's.

When, after some weeks, Marin has not shown up, Charlotte leaves Leonard; returns to Warren; shares with him an aimless and dissolute journey through the South; eventually leaves Warren; finally arrives, in flight from a severe complication of personal and social and historical demons, in the airport at Boca Grande. She is forty. "There was the extreme and volatile thinness of the woman. There was the pale red hair which curled in the damp heat and stood out around her face and seemed almost more weight than she could bear."

AS THIS summary suggests, *A Book of Common Prayer* is oddly sprawling and out of sequence. Only some of its important action takes place in Boca Grande, while most of it concerns Charlotte's life in the United States which Grace reports secondhand. Although the novel is "about" Charlotte Douglas, it's important to see why Miss Didion has established the history and circumstances of her narrator in such detail. Grace's own story is an allegory of the progress of the liberal, humanistic intelligence in the last twenty years. Out of a background informed by the fashionable cultural relativism of the 50's, through a disillusioning alliance with political power in the 60's, Grace emerges in the flat morning light of the present decade with a grim allegiance to secure, empirical systems of information, a will to plot the vagaries of the human individual on a graph of "significant" social and behavioral factors. This is the meaning of Grace's obsession with understanding Charlotte Douglas: "Give me the molecular structure of the protein that defines Charlotte Douglas," she writes. But the punch line is that Grace fails. The individual is at once bigger and more mysterious than the mechanistic models that are meant to comprehend her: that is the moral lesson at the center of this book, and at the center,

*Simon & Schuster, 272 pp., $8.95.

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too, of the humanistic sensibility, with its lingering residue of religious faith.

As for Charlotte, the portrait of her that is painted by Grace is of a woman who exists almost completely in the isolation of her own consciousness, and whose experience of others, of what the novel keeps calling "history," only drives her in deeper. "I think I have never known anyone who led quite so unexamined a life," writes Grace, which is surely right; but it is also true that we never hear the interior noises of Charlotte's own mind. It is of special, rather poignant, interest that Joan Didion, whose writing continually reflects a penchant for self-consciousness and introspection, should present so sympathetic a portrait of an "unexamined life." Through Grace, Miss Didion seems to be working against the grain of her own strongest predilections to signify Charlotte's dilemma: a woman locked in unconsciousness, lacking even the appropriate vocabulary for cursing God and dying.

It is this taking on of a subject matter not easily assimilable to her own broader tones which makes this novel a better book than *Play It As It Lays*. Maria, the central figure in that horrific earlier landscape, was in the grip of the monster nothingness, knew it from the beginning, and only got to know it better as the book progressed. It was a novel that could hardly be more anguished, but one curiously complacent, too, about the anguish it depicted; it seemed to deck itself out too gladly in the clichés of the contemporary novel of neurosis: the Hollywood setting, the drug scene, the mental hospital, the hip sexual self-destruction. *A Book of Common Prayer,* by contrast, provides a suffering heroine for whom we feel more compassion than she is capable of feeling for herself—she embodies Kierkegaard's unnerving paradox that a person can be in despair and not know it—and the result is that her character is not, like Maria's, swamped by the novel's emotional flow. By virtue of this, *A Book of Common Prayer* separates itself, as *Play It As It Lays* did not, from that unfortunate genre, the lyrical-precious novel of female desperation.

The mention of *Play It As It Lays* brings us back to an aspect of Joan Didion's work which I have already mentioned, the fascination with the glamorous. It is present in the new novel to a certain degree. The "beautiful people" hover in the wings of the story, cropping up in the scenes of Charlotte's life with Leonard, associated with Gerardo, Grace's profligate son, and with Warren's wide-ranging acquaintance. Some of the minor portraits seem vaguely *à clef*. There is one scene at least in which these glamorous trimmings pay off. Grieving furiously over her loss of Marin "to history," the one loss her consciousness cannot evade, Charlotte attends a party organized to raise funds for some ambiguous cause. While Leonard dances the limbo on a stage constructed over a pool in Beverly Hills, "an actress who had visited Hanoi" speaks to Charlotte of "the superior health and beauty of the children there":

"It's because they aren't raised by their mothers," the actress said. "They don't have any of that bourgeois personal crap laid on them."

Charlotte studied her wine glass and tried to think of something neutral to say to the actress. She wanted to get up but her chair was blocked by three men who seemed to be discussing the financing of a motion picture, or a war.

"No mama-papa-baby-nuclear-family bullshit," the actress said. "It's beautiful."

War and show business turn into each other in a surreal dance before the eyes of Charlotte, still the child "immaculate" of history and politics. But politics of a theatrical order has also claimed her personally, has taken her child from her—and she herself, in Boca Grande, becomes entangled in a revolution performed, as it were, by marionettes with real guns.

Politics, however, is not what is memorable about this novel; Charlotte Douglas is. Indeed, she is better and larger than the novel she inhabits, and the finest creation in Joan Didion's fiction so far.

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# Looking Back

## *Daphne Merkin*

Robert Kotlowitz's first novel, *Somewhere Else* (1972), was justly praised for its unsentimentalized evocation of *shtetl* life in turn-of-the-century Poland, and for its complex account of the impulse to escape from the confines of that life. The book traces the pilgrimage of one Mendel, a prototypical modern Jew, from the backwaters of his native Lomza to the cosmopolitan hub of London around the time of World War I. Mendel is avid for enlightenment, and in its name he is at first prepared not only to depart from but even to

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Daphne Merkin *contributed "Why Potok Is Popular" to our February 1976 issue.*

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readjust his past—attempting unsuccessfully to hide the fact of his Jewish ancestry from the Gentile temptress, Dorothy Sullivan. Only when Mendel comes to perceive assimilation as an essentially destructive chimera can he accept his past and simultaneously move forward to accept the implications of his rediscovered origins by joining the Jewish Legion to go fight in Palestine.

Kotlowitz's new novel, *The Boardwalk*,* although entirely different in subject matter, continues the enterprise begun in the earlier novel of charting the rocky passage to maturity. Just as Mendel's consciously-denied destiny reaches out to tap him on the shoulder, so, in *The Boardwalk*, which takes place in Atlantic City in the late 30's, do historical circumstances rise up to confront the characters in the very foreground of their lives.

It is late August in 1939 when fourteen-year-old Teddy Lewin (his father, né Levin, had been assured by his brother-in-law, "in the business fifteen years," that "It'll be easier for you as Jack Lewin") comes to Atlantic City to spend two weeks with his family at Sloan's Hotel on the boardwalk. Sloan's is family-run, a cozier Grossinger's, observant of dietary laws, host to a motley crew—the kind only this species of Jewish hotel seems to attract—of small-time businessmen, single women less or more on the make, and the obligatory eccentric, the intellectual Gus Levi, whose wise, brooding spirit hovers over the hotel—and the book. Gus's advice to Teddy, "Hold fast to the nature of ordinary things, for they have the power to console," is recorded at the story's opening, and these words set both the novel's theme and its literary style. Teddy is preeminently concerned with the burgeoning power of ordinary things extraordinarily perceived; he is thin-skinned, impressionable as litmus-paper: "The boy notices, becomes alert. It is habit."

Teddy is the only constant in the shifting family group that arrives by train and taxi from Baltimore to Sloan's doorstep. The first of the two weeks he shares a room with his beautiful, frustrated mother, Bea, and his six-year-old sister, Marion, who watches the modest Teddy undressing in the dark, and who dreams of a future in which Saul, their waiter, will be a famous lawyer and she his adoring secretary. At the end of the week comes Sloan's Sunday night extravaganza—"a thirty-foot shivering buffet of silver herring, whitefish, carp, and bony salmon, all refrigerated in golden aspic"—and the arrival of Teddy's grandfather, father, and elder brother to replace the departing Bea and Marion. In a particularly charged episode Teddy is taken under the boardwalk by two boys who, aided by a collection of pornographic photos, induct him, amid the refuse, into the grimier mysteries of the flesh. Teddy, an incipient connoisseur of texture, a lover of "warm intelligence, elegance and wit," transmutes the coarse adolescent presentation into its dimly-intuited adult version, with a whiff of something truly erotic: the collection of photographs becomes a "dream-book" whose pages Teddy re-turns in his mind, "patiently stalking the scented, old spoor of love, love given, love received." The novel closes as news of Germany's invasion of Poland is broadcast over the hotel's radio.

*The Boardwalk* is a consistently intelligent and attentive novel; its mood is subdued, but in its own quiet way it manages both to evoke the plaintive chords that vibrate within the familiar melodies of life and to suggest the din that surrounds even the most peaceful of settings. The book's theme is the unsuspected hostility of our natural environment—the inhuman steadily encroaching upon the human, "the other side of the moon . . . orbiting daily in the reflected light of the Atlantic City sun"—and of the consequent necessity for vigilance. Behind the "calm as binding as eternity," for the sake of which its guests flock to Sloan's, rages Hitler's bloodthirst. Teddy's proudly assimilated cousins in Poland answer Yiddish letters in English, and ignore anxious instructions about obtaining visas to come to America even as the deadly goose-stepping has begun.

The book's conception is, in essence, a lyrical one, and its performance is appropriately soft-keyed. The narrative voice is well-bred; always tactful, never pushy. Kotlowitz's technique is selective rather than synthetic: it deliberately sidesteps grand effects and concentrates instead on providing a series of closeups. Kotlowitz's most conspicuous strength is his absolutely masterful handling of details, which are so richly invested they glow like objects in a still life: "Gustave Levi was writing postcards. He used a heavy black fountain pen, thick as a cigar, with a gleaming gold point shaped like an arrow." Yet Kotlowitz succeeds for the most part in avoiding the usual pitfall of this *pars pro toto* method, which is to fill the canvas with so many scrupulously-observed minutiae that the larger perspective is lost. *The Boardwalk*'s proportions are deceptively narrow.

THERE are difficulties with the book, which stem mostly from an excess of its virtues. Perhaps it is inevitable that prose this patient, this fine-spun, can sometimes seem a trifle finicky, or that regard for craft can turn on occasion into self-regard. At times, the writing in *The Boardwalk* ceases to be at the service of its intentions and begins to dictate to them; the mechanism that propels the narrative, which has been whirring soundlessly, begins instead to rattle.

A more serious flaw lies in the use of the adolescent protagonist. The juvenile viewpoint, difficult to get right in any circumstances, is not often employed in novels aspiring to "major" themes, perhaps because while there is a gain in intensity, there is also an unavoidable reduction in scope. In its use of such a protagonist, *The Boardwalk* recalls Herman Wouk's *City Boy*, but where the latter novel remains faithful to the strictures of its operating premise, Kotlowitz is unwilling to relinquish the privileges of the adult angle when he needs to get a point across. Teddy thus comes to seem less and less convincing as a fourteen-year-old; even

* Knopf, 288 pp., $8.95.

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granting his precocity, some of his aperçus seem almost ludicrously seasoned. "He was vulnerable to everything," Teddy is caught reflecting about himself, "without emotional discretion; hidden at the bottom of his soul lay a dusty mound of unhealed wounds."

STILL, *The Boardwalk* is an effective and moving rendition of the process of coming to terms with the burden of mature consciousness. And it may also be taken to represent, in its calm and unselfconscious handling of its Jewish material, a particularly welcome instance of that abused genre, the American-Jewish novel. It may indeed be a sign of the times that this class of writing, lately so strident, can be shaped by Kotlowitz's capable hands into something unembattled and almost genteel. In its wryly affectionate yet clear-eyed gaze upon matters Jewish-American, *The Boardwalk* both postdates and, curiously, pre-dates the aggrieved chroniclers of ethnic woe of the 50's and 60's, harking back instead to the bemused and unanxious air of the novels and stories of Daniel Fuchs, Isaac Rosenfeld, and especially Delmore Schwartz. The condition of Jewishness in *The Boardwalk* is neither struggled with (as in Bellow), nor apologized for (as in Potok), nor held in belligerent contempt (as in Philip Roth), but simply taken for granted in a spirit of critical tolerance. For this achievement too Kotlowitz deserves to be admired.

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## Class & Culture

WE MUST MARCH MY DARLINGS. By DIANA TRILLING. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 320 pp. $10.00.*

*Reviewed by* HILTON KRAMER

IN THE lengthy note that Diana Trilling appended to her piece on "Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited" in her new book of essays,* causing it to be rejected by her original publisher, she speaks with evident anxiety about "a new generation of readers" who are likely to be bewildered by "the very idea of writing in 1976 about something called 'anti-Communism.'" "As to a division, and an ever-sharpening one," she observes, "between the anti-Communist 'position' and the anti-anti-Communist 'position' such as I write about . . . it can only strike them as bizarre—what factions are these and who are their members? I must seem to speak not only of a world they never made but of a world they don't inhabit. . . ."

It turned out, as we know, that she had even more cause for worry than she had anticipated. For it was not only this "new generation"—the generation that came of age politically in the 60's—that was not prepared to be reminded of the basic issues separating these anti-Communist and anti-anti-Communist "positions," but an older generation of eminently successful publishing executives as well. In undertaking to respond to Lillian Hellman's cleverly stated criticism of Lionel Trilling and herself in *Scoundrel Time*—an accusation of grave political error, if not of dishonor, couched in terms of a friendly and puzzled solicitude—Mrs. Trilling discovered that she was in conflict with a valuable literary property. And since the value of this literary property was inseparable from the political position its author espoused—a not uncommon convergence of "progressive" ideology and commercial success in the Broadway and Hollywood milieu that had made Miss Hellman both famous and rich—there was no way for Mrs. Trilling to set the record straight without also injuring, if only inadvertently and belatedly, the runaway success of *Scoundrel Time*. That Mrs. Trilling's note on *Scoundrel Time* turned up at the very moment when the lavish, uncritical praise heaped upon the book had at last prompted some vigorous attacks on its historical veracity, was probably not irrelevant to the decision to reject her book either. For Mrs. Trilling had placed the publishers of *Scoundrel Time* in the awkward position of making common cause with the book's adversaries. It was precisely in this combination of political and commercial motives that the rejection of Mrs. Trilling's book was indeed a matter of some significance.

Now that *We Must March My Darlings* has appeared under another imprint, it has become the thing to say that Mrs. Trilling's reply to Lillian Hellman really did not amount to much anyway, and that the publisher who rejected the book was merely being obtuse. But this, I think, is quite unjust, not only to Mrs. Trilling but to her original publisher too. The truth is, though her note on Lillian Hellman is brief, Mrs. Trilling had nonetheless touched a nerve in openly identifying the author of *Scoundrel Time* as someone "who has been able to countenance all the atrocities of Communist power since she and I came of political age in the 30's"—the very nerve that gave *Scoundrel Time* its aura of injured innocence and moral heroism, and won its author an unearned historical prestige—and Miss Hellman's publisher was quick to recognize its implications. They went, after all, to the very heart of Lillian Hellman's "act," and gave to Mrs. Trilling's book an added edge of currency. The real significance of the whole episode was precisely this: that it revealed the extent to which the issue of Stalinism persists as an endemic feature of our cultural life.

It is indeed the great virtue of a good many of the essays that are brought together in *We Must March My Darlings* that they make us vividly aware, insofar as we are susceptible of such awareness, that we, all of us, young and old and middle-aged, do, alas, inhabit a world in which the political "division" Mrs. Trilling speaks of continues to determine not only our basic political attitudes but—and this is the arena of Mrs. Trilling's special strength as a critic, of course—the wider sphere of culture in which these political attitudes wear so many beguiling disguises. In the note I have already quoted she makes explicit the point that elsewhere in the book informs her whole sense of the culture she has placed under examination. About the "new generation of readers" whose real ignorance of the recent past makes her so uneasy, Mrs. Trilling writes:

> . . . while they properly look upon the congressional investigations and McCarthyism as dangerous phenomena in our country's past, they fail to understand the political situation of that period, or the political and cultural conditions to which they were a reaction, conditions which had their origin in an intense Communist partisanship among our ostensibly most conscientious and enlightened classes. Or if they read established, respected periodicals such as the *New York Review of Books* or even the New York *Times Book Review*, it rarely occurs to them to ask how, other than perhaps in response to advertising pressures, their editors determine which book is worth notice, or on what principle its reviewer is selected, and how the prominence or lack of prominence given a review is

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* The piece in question, now revised, appeared in a COMMENTARY symposium, September 1967.



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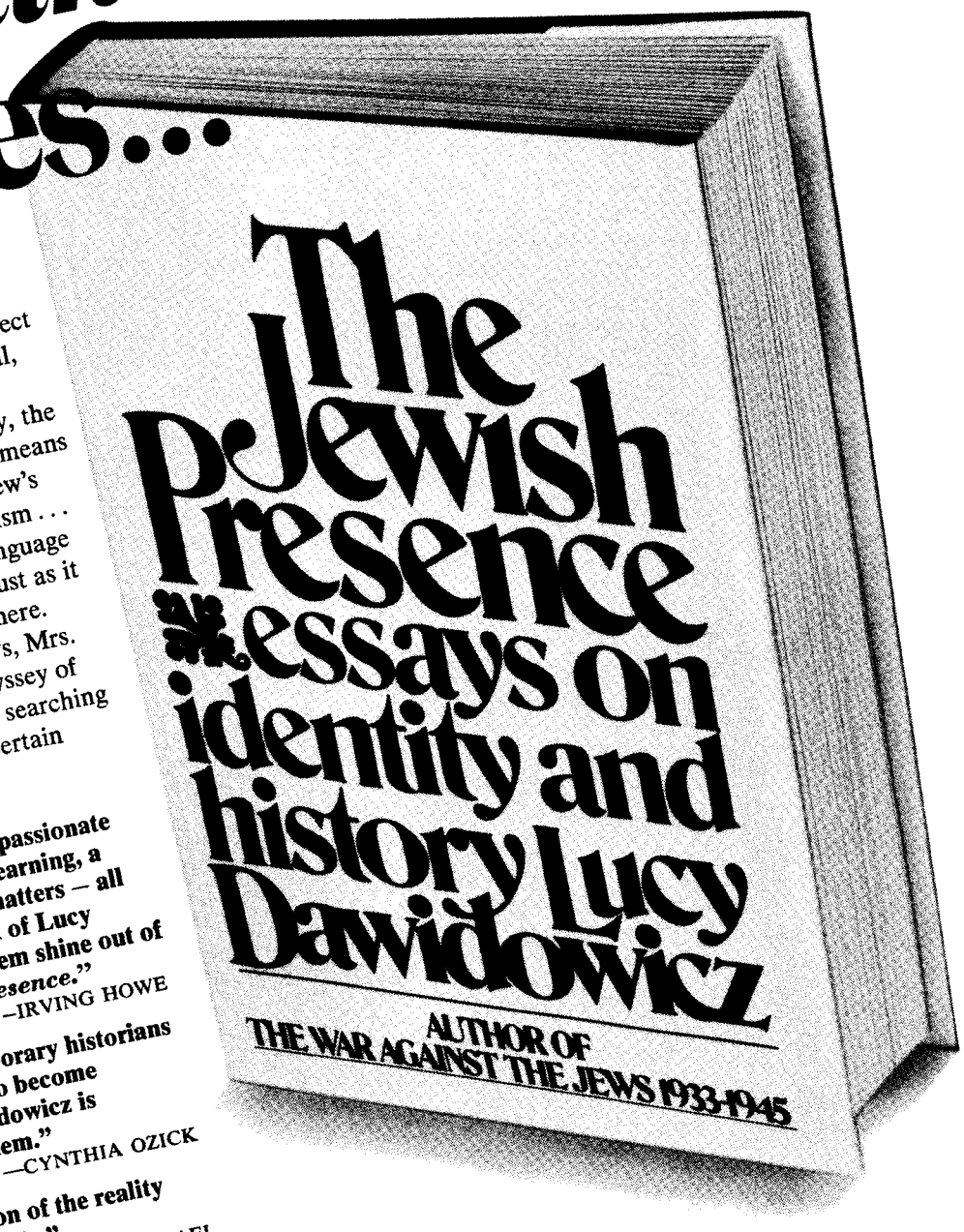


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decided upon: are there considerations other than those of interest and merit? And not alone for this younger generation of readers but for most of their parent generation as well, the possibility that these decisions reflect, as they so often do, present-day political choices which, in turn, sometimes directly and consciously, sometimes indirectly and automatically, refer to the divisions of as much as thirty or forty years ago on the Communist issue, is virtually inconceivable.

It is something of a relief to have the matter restated in such emphatic terms. And if one harbored any doubt about the accuracy of this analysis, which I do not, it has been amply confirmed in the early reviews of Mrs. Trilling's own book—the one in the *Kirkus Reviews* of April 15, for example, or Thomas R. Edwards's review in the New York *Times Book Review* of May 29, or Bruce Cook's in the *Saturday Review* of May 28. Reading such pieces, one may even yearn a little for that earlier period when the "intense Communist partisanship" Mrs. Trilling speaks of was so much more open and acknowledged than it ever is today in the blur and mush that is allowed to pass for serious commentary in the most popular and respectable journals.

Not that the present situation is exactly lacking in avowals of sympathy for Communist power. Far from it. Mrs. Trilling herself reminds us of the influential voices that, increasingly in the past decade, have "commandeered the word 'liberal' for views which often have their primary source in a reluctance to speak out against Communism." But the radical pieties bequeathed us by the upheavals of the 60's—pieties now so deeply embedded in the respectable middle-class culture of the 70's that they are virtually indistinguishable from the very substance of that culture—are far more insidious than the old Stalinist clichés in their power to shape our lives. The great strength of Mrs. Trilling's criticism lies in its keen perception of the relation that obtains between the "dictates" of this culture and the lives, especially the lives of the young, that are shaped by its governing impulses and ideas. Much of *We Must March My Darlings* is concerned with the young, with the disaffected offspring of the educated middle class—with their education, their "aesthetic," their sexuality, their tastes and manners and morals, even more than with their politics, which are viewed less as a cause of their characteristic actions than as an expression of a fundamental cultural disposition. In one of the longest and best essays in the book—Mrs. Trilling's extraordinary account of the student revolt at Columbia University in the spring of 1968, "On the Steps of Low Library"*—she speaks of "the triumph of culture over politics," and this is her abiding theme in *We Must March My Darlings*.

In the triumph of culture over politics, the modern college classroom plays a great part, of course, and Mrs. Trilling is very much in her element in discussing it. She understands the extent to which the authority enjoyed by Timothy Leary as one of the prophets of the youth drug culture in the late 60's, for example, rested on his position as a defrocked college professor. It was at college, after all, that his addled followers learned to admire the kind of rebellion he came to exemplify; it was in the classroom that they were initiated into the mystery of employing the resources of professional mind for a purpose of utter mindlessness. "In a society as mobile as that of America and as unavailable to the ethical instruction once conveyed through established religion," Mrs. Trilling writes in "Celebrating with Dr. Leary," "the school is more than an institution for teaching the intellectual disciplines, it is the matrix of our cultural values, the chief source and guardian of our personal and social morality. What the school establishes today, it hopes that the home will have absorbed by tomorrow. . . ."

She returns to this theme—and to the unexamined consequences that follow from it—in "On the Steps of Low Library" when she observes:

> The teaching of modern subjects in our universities, especially literature, proceeds on some unadmitted assumption of a drastic discontinuity between art and life. It is as if the professor who sanctions the revolutionary content of the contemporary works which he teaches were still speaking from the platform of a hundred years ago, when art was outside the stream of "real" life, outside the world of action and political choice, its influence upon public affairs a matter of some slow unfathomable penetration of the public consciousness by a remote mysterious object called culture. Among the many assumptions undermined by the attack on Columbia, not the least important was the illusion that contemporary art is an academic subject like any other, adequately dealt with without doctrinal commitment. Only the blindest eye could fail to see the extent to which the revolutionary scene at the University represented the moral substance of contemporary art translated into actuality; indeed the triumph of culture over politics.

In the essay on Timothy Leary, she speaks of "the tide of nihilism" then (1967) engulfing the young, and while she is under no illusion that the classroom alone was responsible for unleashing it, she is forthright about the role that the classroom will be obliged to assume in correcting it. "But if anything is to be done to stem it," she writes, "this will have to be undertaken by the same class of people who did such a successful job of bringing the failure of the modern world to our educated consciousness."

It was in search of what this "same class of people" were up to at her old college that Mrs. Trilling returned to Radcliffe for nine weeks in the spring of 1971, living in her old residence hall and interviewing many of its students. It is this section of *We Must March My Darlings*, which gives the book its title (out of a poem by Walt Whitman), that is at once the most poignant and the most alarming. Clearly Mrs. Trilling liked a good many of the undergraduate students she met at Radcliffe and Harvard that

* Originally published in Commentary, November 1968.

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spring, despite her distaste for their unkempt appearance and their unfeeling habit of littering the public rooms of their residences with the rubbish of their daily life. They seem to have talked freely to her, and there are some fine moments of tenderness, sympathy, humor, and intellectual exchange in her account of their conversations. But she was just as clearly appalled at the way these students were being victimized, and at the degree of their acquiescence in and even enthusiasm for their victimization, by the cultural, pedagogic, and sexual imperatives that were systematically incapacitating them for the emotional as well as the professional burdens of adult life. She found these students not only ignorant of the rudiments of history—even, as she points out, about the history of the radical ideas they sometimes espoused—and generally aimless in anything having to do with future professional attainment, but simply and smugly adrift in an intellectual wasteland.

Yet the intellectual deficiencies of the education offered at Radcliffe—more a reflection of abdication on the part of the college, Mrs. Trilling seems to feel, than on the part of the students (she is, in any case, hardest of all on the college president)—were very far from being the whole of the sad story. It is about the very lives these students were being induced to live—the proud fruit of all the vaunted "liberations" of our time—that Mrs. Trilling has the bleakest story to tell. Behind the appealing "ease and casualness with which the men and the girls seemed to have come together as the wish took them," she found a dismal loneliness, "the endemic isolateness of Cambridge undergraduate life." Behind the much-admired sexual freedom and the "institutional permission for the sexes to cohabit," using the same toilets and sleeping in the same beds, she discovered a life that represented an induction into sexual sterility, a phenomenon of "de-eroticization" in the relation of the sexes that seemed to nullify everything that the sexual revolution of our time had promised. There is nothing sadder in this book than the account given Mrs. Trilling by a Harvard undergraduate of his lengthy "affair" with a Radcliffe girl, with whom he regularly shared a bed but with whom he had never made love. In this example of "the new chastity," as Midge Decter once called it, we are given a glimpse of the triumph of culture over the very capacity to live—and it is this that leaves the most lasting impression in Mrs. Trilling's account of her return to the Radcliffe campus.

BUT SHE is also concerned in this essay about the effect of this and other modes of "liberation" on the Radcliffe student as they manifest themselves in her preparation for "the brutal world of economic competition," which, as Mrs. Trilling observes, "looks as if it will be our universe for still some time to come." Here too she found a bleak

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prospect. "It would seem to me that, especially today, a process of natural selection was necessarily at work to put the mark of restlessness and unattained aspiration on most of the girls I had interviewed," she writes, and goes on:

> Obviously there were dangling men at Harvard too, intellectual spendthrift men, who squandered what was offered them in preparation for their futures. . . . [But] even in a period of extraordinary narcissism—which is how I judged it—among college students, the students at Harvard apparently recognized the extent to which the search for personal identity depends on the way in which we earn our livings. . . . It is the fierce imperative of money, the need to earn a living not for one year or five but always, that gives men their immeasurable advantage over women in the quest for identity.

That the Radcliffe of 1971, no more than the Radcliffe of Mrs. Trilling's day, had done little or nothing to alter the situation—had, indeed, by encouraging a "flaccid sentimental idealism," abetted it—is a source of considerable distress to her. "For if the purportedly outstanding women's college of America," she writes, "can do no better for its students . . . what chance, I must wonder, have we for a female social force equal to the task of claiming full citizenship for the second sex?"

MRS. TRILLING offers us little hope, then, that the "people who did such a successful job of bringing the failure of the modern world to our educated consciousness" are going to bring us much else. Perhaps the reason—she does not quite say this—lies in their attitude toward their own class, an attitude that Mrs. Trilling, oddly enough, seems to share. Prompted by her experience at Radcliffe, she writes:

> One dreams of a Tocqueville to deal as it deserves with the subject of America's present-day ambivalence toward the very idea of the middle class, that bulwark of American society which provides the economic sustenance of our idealism at the same time as, all anomalously, it nourishes the most lethal assaults on our tranquility. Surely there was never a period when our feelings about middle-class privilege, middle-class advantage, were as double-edged as they are today. On the one hand, we despise the middle class as the source and repository of those assumptions and attitudes at which, in our modern liberal consciousness, we are most angry and which we most fear. On the other hand, what *except* the middle class is the promised land toward which we wish to move all who were not born its citizens—after which it will presumably have so different a character that it will no longer generate anger and fear!

This is finely said, but there is, all the same, something important missing from it. For is it only an "economic" sustenance that the middle class has given "our idealism"? Has it given us—has it given Mrs. Trilling—no moral or political or cultural sustenance? There are times when the "ambivalence" Mrs. Trilling invokes in this passage has a hollow ring, when it is made to serve as a euphemism for a harsher and less equivocal avowal than she can usually bring herself to make.

Elsewhere in *We Must March My Darlings* she does make such an avowal, however, when she writes that "Within a capitalist society like our own, whose form of government is democratic, it is capitalism which I regard as the corrupting element." This, I think, is an astonishing statement, not only in its context—it occurs in Mrs. Trilling's essay on "Liberal Anti-Communism Revisited"—but in its relation to everything else that is discussed in her book. We know, of course, that it is the prerogative of an essayist like Mrs. Trilling to raise more questions than she will ever be called upon to answer, but this particular one—the question of capitalism as "the corrupting element" in our society—is not exactly marginal to her concerns, and it is a little stunning to discover that she harbors such a superficial and unexamined view of an important part of her subject. For how can one uphold the ethos of the middle class, which Mrs. Trilling repeatedly does in these essays, and yet take refuge in this simplistic piety about the economic system that gives the middle class its enabling power? What is at work here, I suspect—what is often at work even in the invocation of "ambivalence"—is less a considered political analysis than the liberal's craven fear of being stigmatized as a conservative. If one compares Mrs. Trilling's remark about capitalism as "the corrupting element" with the very different discussion of capitalism to be found in two books that have come to us this season from the anti-Communist Left in Europe—Jean-François Revel's *The Totalitarian Temptation,* and Paul Johnson's *Enemies of Society*—one can better appreciate, I think, the hollowness of her position on this question.

THERE are other curiosities in Mrs. Trilling's book that likewise point to some pretty basic inconsistencies. About Mrs. Trilling's attitude toward Norman Mailer, one could say a good deal—there is now ample material for an essay on the subject—but it may suffice for the moment to point out that, while disapproving and even abhorring much that he has to say about politics and sex, she remains inclined to absolve him on purely "aesthetic" grounds. This, of course, is the reverse of her usual position; there is not much else in the culture of her time to which Mrs. Trilling grants a similar exemption. No doubt it is because Mailer's aesthetic is so firmly grounded in the mode of ambivalence in which she herself takes frequent refuge that she is disinclined to follow the logic of her own often astringent criticism of his work to the conclusion it seems to invite. In one of the best passages of Mrs. Trilling's essay on the Columbia upheaval, she writes:

> One of the lessons taught in the uprising—it bears on the old question of why the center cannot hold—is the speed with which whatever makes its appeal to direct action achieves emotional advantage over whatever is committed to the slower and more passive (as it would appear) process of reasonableness; how to activate decency and teach it to stop feeling deficient because of its low quotient of drama is

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obviously one of the urgent problems of modern society.

Yet, though she is quick to see and speak against the way Mailer's *ideas* abet this destructive priority, she is reluctant to see in his *style* an even more insidious contribution to the phenomenon she deplores.

Perhaps the oddest of all Mrs. Trilling's essays, however, is the piece called "Our Uncomplaining Homosexuals," in which she compares two authors and two books—J. R. Ackerley in *My Father and Myself* and Philip Roth in *Portnoy's Complaint*—very much to the latter's disadvantage. Here too we are in the presence of an "aesthetic" exemption disguised as a hard-headed social analysis. What she admires so much in Ackerley is the "guiltlessness" with which he speaks of his homosexual life—that, and what she calls the "laws of good taste" that are observed in his account of it. "Where the whole pedagogic point of Roth's book lies in its insistence that our personal disorders are a consequence of our disordered civilization, the pedagogic point, which is also the human point, of Ackerley's book lies in its reminder that imperfect man makes for an imperfect world," she writes. Portnoy, on the other hand, is said to "call for a state of unconditioned bliss for all of mankind."

This is not quite my reading of *Portnoy's Complaint*, or of *My Father and Myself* either. There is something bizarre, in any case, in the spectacle of Mrs. Trilling admonishing the obstreperous and indelicate author of *Portnoy's Complaint* to mind his manners and take a lesson from the dispassionate prose of an English gentleman who had the good taste to solve *his* sexual complaint by settling into a cozy, sexless—if sexless it was—domesticity with a pet Alsatian bitch. There is much to admire in Ackerley's book, and there is plenty to question in Roth's, but as soon as we set them beside each other, as Mrs. Trilling invites us to do, it is abundantly clear, I think, that while the author of *Portnoy's Complaint* is emphatically on the side of life, the author of *My Father and Myself* is first in a miserable and then in a resigned flight from it. This is indeed the whole poignancy of *My Father and Myself*, and it is startling to see it commended as some kind of model—of all things, as a model of manliness. Both in this essay and in another—the discussion of Nigel Nicolson's *Portrait of a Marriage* that gives her book a rather limp conclusion—Mrs. Trilling proves to be an unreliable guide to the vagaries of English literary society. She is too easily impressed with its fine, easy manners and what she calls "a sense of self"—which she cannot always distinguish, I think, from its endemic snobbery—to be able to measure its failure and waste. She is in a much better position to measure our own, even though she herself is by no means as unswayed by the "dictates" of our culture as she would have us believe.

## Psychiatry & the State

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KARL KRAUS AND THE SOUL-DOCTORS. By THOMAS SZASZ. *Louisiana State University Press. 180 pp. $9.95.*

*Reviewed by* PETER H. SCHUCK

For all its trappings of scientific authority, psychiatry has always had influential detractors. Today it is often an object of ridicule and contempt, not only among members of the lay public but also among some of those who know it best. Thomas Szasz, a professor of psychiatry and the author of numerous works on the subject, is certainly among the most dedicated and prolific skeptics. In support of his own critique, Szasz has resurrected the work of Karl Kraus, an Austrian poet and contemporary of Freud, who devoted much of a distinguished journalistic career to discrediting Freud's scientific pretensions. To Kraus, Freud's celebrat-

PETER H. SCHUCK, *a new contributor, is a lawyer who has written in the* Public Interest *and elsewhere on issues of public policy.*


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ed ventures into psychobiography (or "Pathography" as it was then called), for example, were little more than character assassination prettified by pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo and informed by arbitrary notions of conformity and normalcy.

Szasz proudly places himself within the Kraus tradition of criticism. To Szasz, however, the corruption of psychiatry lies not so much in the poverty of its theory or in the personal foibles of its practitioners as in its alliance with the coercive power of the modern state. This consummation, which even Freud could not have envisioned, occurred when the state delegated to psychiatrists the responsibility for defining normalcy and dangerousness, and hence for deciding whether and when individuals may be committed to mental hospitals against their wills. According to Szasz, this assertion of social control so violates humanistic principles that we have woven a tissue of euphemisms and lies to conceal our hypocrisy from ourselves. To wrench us out of this self-delusive state, he employs jarring metaphors: mental hospitals are "prisons"; commitment is "rape"; attending psychiatrists are "wardens"; the doctor-patient relationship is one of "plantation slavery."

Szasz's indictment is based upon several fundamental propositions. The first is that there is simply no such thing as mental illness. In truth, Szasz insists, there are only delusions at greater or lesser removes from reality. Second, there is no justification for "incarcerating" a person in a mental hospital unless he or she has engaged in criminal behavior. Finally, psychiatrists do not know how to treat involuntary patients effectively.

THE questions Szasz raises lie at the very core of the eternal tension between liberty and coercion, between the right of individuals to indulge their eccentricities without restraint and the competing right of the community to protect the majority by defining the boundary between permissible and impermissible public behavior. And yet, one must conclude that Szasz has answered these questions only by ignoring their complexities.

He argues, for example, that the state cannot be trusted to resolve such conflicts fairly because it is a party to the involuntary commitment of individuals. "Obviously, where the state is a party to this sort of psychiatric misrepresentation —where it is itself the agent or agency of fraud or force—it cannot also be the safeguard against its own actions." That proposition may be "obvious" to Szasz, but it is clearly false as a matter of constitutional principle and begs the most important questions. Where the state, purporting to act in the name of the community, moves to commit a person alleged to be dangerous to himself or to others, only the law—and that necessarily means men and women clothed with the power of the state—can arbitrate the conflicting claims. Is not the state an "agency of . . . force" when it tells us that we must be immunized against contagious disease, bear arms, and undertake a host of other actions which we may find personally obnoxious? We may validly object to such coercion on a variety of grounds, but surely not on the ground that the court which ultimately passes on the lawfulness of that coercion should be disqualified because it is an organ of the state. In short, Szasz ignores one ineluctable fact: *someone* must decide whether commitment is justified.

By refusing to acknowledge this fact, Szasz avoids the most difficult, intractable questions which follow from it: what standards should guide the committing physician (and ultimately the court) in deciding whether to commit? Are we justified in depriving a person of his liberty when he is deemed "dangerous to himself" but not dangerous to others? What do we mean by "dangerous"? What standard of proof should be required? How can a person rebut assertions and predictions by forensic psychiatrists concerning his mental condition?

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Are judges competent to evaluate this kind of evidence? Because the state, in Szasz's view, has no right to make any such determinations, he can elide all these issues. On other, equally fundamental questions, such as the ability of forensic psychiatry to evaluate "dangerousness," Szasz leaves no doubt as to his own negative conclusion, yet he contents himself with stating rather than justifying it.

Because his opposition to involuntary commitment is absolute, Szasz is opposed as well to any attempts to ameliorate the condition of patients that stop short of doing away with the institution altogether, that attempt to "prettify plantations" rather than to abolish "psychiatric slavery." His systematic attack on the 1975 Supreme Court decision in *Donaldson* v. *Connor,* in which the Court ruled that a person involuntarily confined in a mental institution possesses a "right to treatment," proceeds directly from this premise. In the course of excoriating the civil-liberties groups and "public-interest" lawyers who obtained this ruling, however, Szasz also makes a convincing case that in the long run, the decision will restrict rather than expand the freedom of mental patients, serving only to strengthen the prerogatives, the "right to treat," of the institutional psychiatrist upon whom the patient is so dependent:

> The justices of the Supreme Court devised a ruling that presents as facts or phenomena what, in the real world, are invariably the claims or counterclaims of psychiatrists and patients who ought to be released from mental hospitals, but the only persons who clearly meet the criteria they have specified are invisible men and women.

Szasz's militant humanism, which pervades all of his work, constitutes both his weakness (as when he insists that society may never step *decisively* between the madman and his delusion) and his strength (as when he is dissecting the "anti-psychiatry" movement associated with R. D. Laing). He reminds us that the truest friends of mankind are not those who romanticize the weak by using them as a means to an ideological end, or those who would reduce man to an aggregation of pseudo-scientific concepts, but those who acknowledge our moral responsibility to endure the suffering, conflicts, and imperfections which, psychiatry notwithstanding, constitute the irreducible human condition.

## Advance Man

GATES OF EDEN: AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE 60's. By MORRIS DICKSTEIN. *Basic Books. 300 pp. $11.95.*

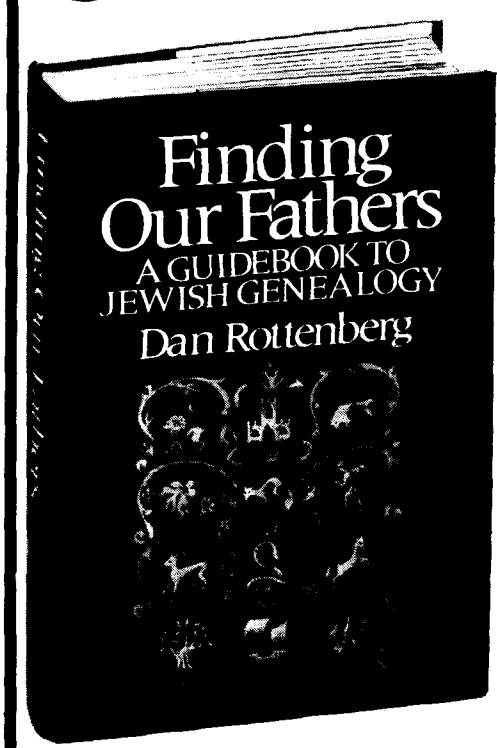
*Reviewed by* JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Is a disinterested view of the 60's possible? At the distance of nearly a decade, it still seems unlikely. Instead, two distinct—and implacably opposed—views now prevail. The first holds that the 60's were an Edenic time, when bonds burst loose, spontaneity routed repression, a spirit of healthy experiment was in the air, and love and hopefulness, for those prepared to splash in them, flooded the land. The second view holds that there was a flood, all right, but one that brought in its wake drugs, an idiot adoration of youth, and a devotion to the cultivation of the self that was at its heart anti-social; and that this flood, when it finally receded, left such residual effects as child pornography, pathetic self-help therapies and cults, and a political paranoia that has made the business of governing nearly impossible. What is especially interesting about these two views—the one holding that a great opportunity was lost, the other that a disaster was barely averted—is that they not only seem to be, but quite probably are, irreconcilable. A balanced view, in other words, may be impossible.

Morris Dickstein, a professor of English at Queens College, would seem to believe otherwise. His partic-

JOSEPH EPSTEIN *is the editor of the* American Scholar.

"Mazel Tov!"*

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ular subject in *Gates of Eden* is what he construes to be the "new sensibility" of the 60's. He considers this new sensibility in its various aspects: in literature, in journalism, in rock music, in black humor, in the fiction of black novelists, in student activism. If there was a common thread to all this, Dickstein thinks it was the utopian impulse, formed out of the emotions—anger, disgust, and mockery—which the various 60's novelists, theorists, singers, and students he writes about bore toward life in America. In their art, as well as in their hearts, dissent from the general drift of American life was a necessity, "alienation and opposition the only honorable course."

Dickstein's intention is to see all this whole, to view it in an even-handed yet unblinkingly *engagé* manner. "One needn't sign up in one camp or another," he writes; "it's possible to be neither swinger nor reactionary but merely what Matthew Arnold liked to call a disinterested critic." How disinterested is Morris Dickstein? Although he does not do so excessively, Dickstein occasionally breaks into his text to supply an autobiographical note. Sometimes these notes are revelatory, and speak to the question of disinterestedness. Explaining his attraction to the doctrines of Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse when he first encountered them as an undergraduate, for example, he writes: "I was sexually starved, though I hardly knew it, and these men seemed to promise that good times were just around the corner." From other of his autobiographical notes we learn that Morris Dickstein was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, was a most earnest student at Columbia (and, later, at Cambridge and Yale), and that now, at thirty-seven, feels his "formative experiences bridged both the 50's and the 60's." One day in 1967 Dickstein finished his "thesis in the morning, went downtown to march against the war in the afternoon, and raced up to New Haven to deposit the manuscript in the evening."

While the 60's cannot be said to have radicalized Morris Dickstein exactly, the atmosphere and events of the decade were, as he acknowledges, "liberating" to him. He partook, to use the soft therapeutic lingo of the period, in the 60's "search for authentic selfhood." So while *Gates of Eden* is about American culture in the 60's, as its subtitle says, Dickstein has a personal stake in the cultural history he has written. If Dickstein were to have found the period one of cultural aridity and fraudulence, then he might have had to conclude there was something arid and fraudulent about its "liberating" personal effects as well. But he finds nothing of the kind. Quite the reverse. For Dickstein, the 60's represent a high period of advance, both in politics and in art.

In literature, Dickstein discovers the 60's to have been the setting for "the second wave of modernism." American fiction, especially, "joined the camp of modernism with a vengeance." In politics, he finds the decade to have been a time "when politics became modernist." For Dickstein, "modernist," though he does not define it with any great care, is an esteemed badge. He is an avant-garde man who is hostage to an avant-garde theory. His theory has it that "every modern movement at first looks ugly and inartistic to the extent that it dislocates existing norms. Only later does it create its own norm, which gets established but eventually succumbs to imitation, self-caricature, a certain devolution of energy (which readies the scene for the next avant-garde)."

Now, whatever one's view about the politics of the 60's, almost everyone before Morris Dickstein came along would seem to have been agreed that the 60's were a particularly barren period for the arts. Not even the *New York Review of Books*, so ardent a cheerleader on the sidelines during race riots, draft-card burnings, and American military defeat, had many good words to say about the condition of the arts in this decade of the counter-culture. Dickstein, however, approving of the politics, approves of the art.

While many of the distortions in Dickstein's history are the result of his politics, perhaps fully as many are the result of his desertion of common sense. Language leads him astray. Dickstein's language is vastly overheated, the product of a mind perhaps made feverish by the consumption of too much bad literature. Allen Ginsberg, one of his few heroes from the 50's, "seemed destined, like so many others in the gray 70's, to learn the meaning of limbo." Students attending Dickstein's course on William Blake "came to get high [yet] stayed to sweat out the intricacies of the system." A dream of absolute freedom is "the flip side of the coin of alienation." Bob Dylan sang "as if the Hegelian *Zeitgeist* had for a space of time come to rest on his shoulders." Students during the 60's were "completely existential revolutionaries"; artists feel "the universal ache"; songs convey "a riveting expression of sexual need." When it is not hyped-up, Dickstein's style is merely undistinguished. But most of the time it is so hyped-up that he achieves a prose in which, as Mill remarked of Macaulay's, it is simply not possible to tell the truth.

As Dickstein's language is inflated, so are many of his critical judgments. Norman Mailer, for example, in *Armies of the Night* wrote "great autobiography and great history." "Our genius (in Irving Howe's phrase)," Mailer (in Dickstein's) "helped show the way." To what?, one might ask. To "the metaphysics of sexuality and selfhood," it turns out. He did this, it seems, by "confronting the confrontations of the period with his personal witness." In the same loose way, Kurt Vonnegut is admired for providing "as full a helping of moral ambiguity as any modernist could want." Yet again: "Like many other creative artists of the 60's, Dylan's genius is closely bound up with paranoia." Dickstein's taste runs to writers who apparently, no matter how muddled, above all reflect their times. If one were persuaded by the literary judgments in *Gates of Eden*, one would have to believe as well in the aphorism by Karl Kraus: "Today's literature is prescriptions written by patients."

But Dickstein also likes writers who reflect his own revisionist poli-

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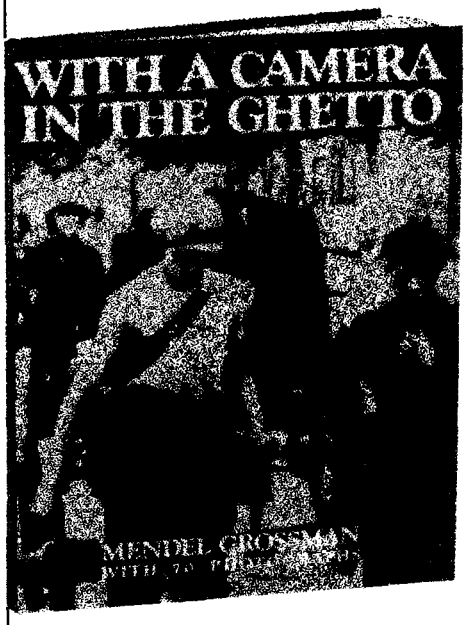
tics. Thus, Garry Wills, Yes; Tom Wolfe, No; Joseph Heller, Yes; Saul Bellow, No in Thunder! (Bellow's novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet,* is a touchstone for testing opinions about the 60's; Dickstein remarks on the book's "rank, embittered pages.") Dickstein refers to the novelists he admires as the "fiction radicals"; the New Journalism, another advent of the decade, he refers to as participatory journalism, "on the analogy of the New Left's cherished ideal of 'participatory democracy.'" If his favored novelists are the equivalent of political radicals, and if his favored journalists are the equivalent of the New Left's ideal in action, what, by analogy, might Dickstein be? Perhaps Patty Hearst?

ONE heritage of the 60's, as Dickstein says, is that "the line between high culture and popular culture gave way . . . and on some fronts was erased entirely." Surely he is right about this. But what is in question is the benefit to be derived from this elision. So far as one can make out, the victim has been popular culture, which has been made to submit to the language and style of analysis of the graduate seminar. The result is generally to strike a note of pomposity and unintentional comedy on the part of the academic getting up his popular-culture subject. Dickstein does not write at length about movies in the 60's, but he does at one point remark that the movies of Woody Allen, those charming if frail vessels, "lack any architectonic imagination"—which sounds like nothing so much as a line from a Woody Allen movie.

*Gates of Eden* devotes an entire chapter to rock music. "Rock," Dickstein notes, "was the original religion of the 60's." In the accepted graduate-school language, he offers an album-by-album exegesis of the works of Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones. It is an exegesis replete with false historical correspondences worthy of the young S.J. Perelman: "Dylan went electric at almost the very moment that Lyndon Johnson began bombing North Vietnam and escalating the war in the south." After providing a long literary analysis of Dylan's songs, Dickstein writes: "This is what makes so many of the more literary analyses of Dylan's songs beside the point. . . ." The point, it turns out, is that to appreciate Dylan's songs it is not sufficient to read the lyrics or even listen to the recordings; one has, on Dickstein's word, to dance to them. One of the nice things about Shakespeare is that you can enjoy him sitting down.

But it is in his chapter on "Black Writing and Black Nationalism" that Dickstein gives the game away. The first hint is his admiring reference to "these resplendent and angry new blacks." Then, in a sentence that really ought to have a slide shown with it, he writes: "In the dark night of the soul the melting pot was irrelevant; the deep and tangled roots of identity, once glimpsed, did not en-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courage assimilation." Dickstein trots out the usual revisionist line on black writers, scolding James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison for attempting to shake free of the influence of Richard Wright, and then, significantly, concludes: "The healthiest side of black separatism was the return not just to group solidarity but to that typical 60's destination, one's own head."

*"That typical 60's destination, one's own head."* The 60's were not a particularly good time for poor blacks, or for writers, or for the working classes, or even for the young (Dickstein's chronicle scants the subject of drugs altogether). But in the heads of a certain segment of the middle class a great deal of excitement was going on, especially in the heads of young professors with psychological liberation to gain and very little to lose. In Morris Dickstein these particular 60's have found the chronicler they most richly deserve.

## A British Aristocrat

UNITY MITFORD: AN ENQUIRY INTO HER LIFE AND THE FRIVOLITY OF EVIL. By DAVID PRYCE-JONES. *Dial Press/James Wade. 292 pp. $9.95.*

*Reviewed by* HYAM MACCOBY

ONE OF the most interesting things about David Pryce-Jones's book on Unity Mitford is the extraordinary row that it provoked. Mr. Pryce-Jones had the idea that it would be intriguing to interview all the surviving people who had known Unity Valkyrie Mitford, the tall blonde daughter of an English lord, who had a strange sexless love affair with Hitler, and who shot herself with her silver revolver (carried for this very eventuality) when the war which she dreaded broke out between England and Germany. Certainly, one would have thought, a book that had to be written; and sufficient time has passed to make the events described seem bizarre rather than disturbing. But far from it. All hell broke loose. The English press from the intellectual *Times Literary Supplement* to the popular dailies was filled with recriminations for weeks. It is a matter of some importance to inquire why.

First let us survey the *dramatis personae*. The Mitford girls, daughters of Lord and Lady Redesdale ("Farve" and "Muv"), seemed to be prime representatives of the Bright Young Things who glittered in the 30's. Beneath the high spirits, ready laughter, and private language, there was something about the Mitfords that differentiated them from their friends: a determination to do something extraordinary in the world, and achieve fame, or at least notoriety. Nancy became a famous novelist. Jessica became a Communist, and ran off to Spain with Esmond Romilly, another upper-class young rebel. Later, Jessica married a Jewish American Communist lawyer, Bob Treuhaft, thus putting herself completely beyond the pale. Deborah declared in childhood that she would marry a Duke, and so she did; she became the Duchess of Devonshire. Diana, the most celebrated for her beauty (and they were all beautiful), sought power of a political kind. She married Sir Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British fascist movement, who hoped to emulate Mussolini and Hitler by becoming the dictator of Britain. Diana was interned with Mosley during the war, and the couple now live in France, still hoping for the call to rescue England from decline. Unity, the most awkward and ill-adjusted of the girls (sometimes even appearing ugly), set her sights on the greatest leader of all, Hitler. She became a fanatical fascist and Jew-hater. She saw herself, probably, as the future empress of a combined Nordic empire of England and Germany under Hitler.

This grandiose dream was too much even for a Mitford, and Unity died in disappointment and disgrace. Yet she achieved some of her aims. She was continuously in the headlines for a few years. She was the intimate friend of Hitler and the top-ranking Nazis, especially Goebbels and Streicher. She swept around Europe in a frenzy of excitement and felt herself to be at the center of world events. It was a logical extension of the whirl of the Bright Young Things, which was portrayed in all its fevered gaiety and self-destructive restlessness by Evelyn Waugh in *Vile Bodies*. It was a way of continuing the whirl at a time when others, no longer so young or so bright, were settling down into bourgeois respectability.

IT WAS also a way of continuing the sense of aristocratic superiority which is one of the important things about the Mitfords. David Pryce-Jones has some interesting things to say about this. He points out that at this time the English aristocracy was at last beginning to fall away from the center of power, and to decline into a mere picturesque round of debutante balls, esoteric slang, and inbred snobbery, of no great significance to the outside world. But there were some who were too high-spirited to acquiesce in such a loss of significance. They looked around for some cause which would bring them back to the center. The Mitfords were of the highest aristocracy —the kind who are reluctant to send their children to boarding schools because of the vulgar bourgeois elements they would have to mix with in such places. Consequently, the daughters (and in extreme instances even the sons) of such families tend to be brought up by tutors, whom they sometimes despise and tease cruelly. They learn nothing except what they want to learn, and may turn out as savages (like Unity Mitford), or, just occasionally, as original spirits (like Bertrand Russell, or, in her minor way, Nancy Mitford).

Even the savages, however, have the aristocratic confidence which carries all before them, once they find something they really want to do. When Unity decided to be a fascist, there was no nonsense about joining the ranks and working her way up—she joined at the top. But after a short while, the British fascist party seemed provincial and limited. What she wanted was the real top, and this meant going to Berlin and joining the intimate circle of Hitler himself. This she accomplished with a typical combination of schoolgirl cheek and

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upper-class insouciance by haunting the Osteria Bavaria, the restaurant frequented by Hitler, until Hitler took notice of her and invited her to his table.

As A savage, Unity was unsurpassable. She was the bane of the unfortunate succession of governesses who were hired by Lord and Lady Redesdale to attempt to teach her. One of them, Miss Hussey, had a great fear of snakes. Unity found this out, and acted accordingly. She left her pet grass snake, Enid, wrapped around the toilet chain. When Miss Hussey locked herself in, "there was shortly an ear-splitting shriek followed by a thud. The unconscious woman was ultimately released with the aid of crowbars." This story is told in *Hons and Rebels,* Jessica Mitford's account of the Mitford childhood years, and might be thought an amusing childhood prank, if one could avoid associating it with later instances of heartlessness to social inferiors, regarded as fair game. (When David Pryce-Jones, pursuing indefatigably his policy of interviewing personally everyone associated with Unity, asked Miss Hussey about the snake incident, she professed to have no recollection of it, and said that she had got on well with Unity. This seems a typical instance of repression of what Samuel Johnson called "the humiliations of being an usher.") When Unity was a debutante, she so scorned the round of *haute-bourgeoisie* pair-rituals that she used to take her pet rat along and release it among the dancing couples. Before this, she had been sent finally to a school for young ladies, but such was her contemptuous disregard for the school rules that she was expelled after little more than a year (the headmistress, Miss Boys, refusing to be overawed by a personal visit from Lord Redesdale on the matter). The only school subject in which Unity ever condescended to show an interest was art, for which she had considerable talent.

Yet a curious effect of belonging to the aristocracy was that it granted freedom from some of the usual upper-middle-class snobberies. It was more acceptable to hobnob with gamekeepers than with the tiresome aspiring bourgeoisie. This may explain why it was possible for Unity to associate with, and even develop a passion for, a vulgarian like Hitler. She could even become an intimate friend of Streicher, a man of sickening grossness of behavior and speech, without ever losing her own impeccable aristocratic air. This is the camaraderie of the highest and the lowest which has always given top aristocrats (Julius Caesar, for example) the gift of the "common touch." Here perhaps, David Pryce-Jones's acute analysis needs to be supplemented a little. He sees the Mitfords as uncomfortably aware of their lack of rapport with the lower ranks of society, and as reaching out in various desperate ways to bridge the gap. But perhaps what they were doing was to reinstate, in terms relevant to the confusion of

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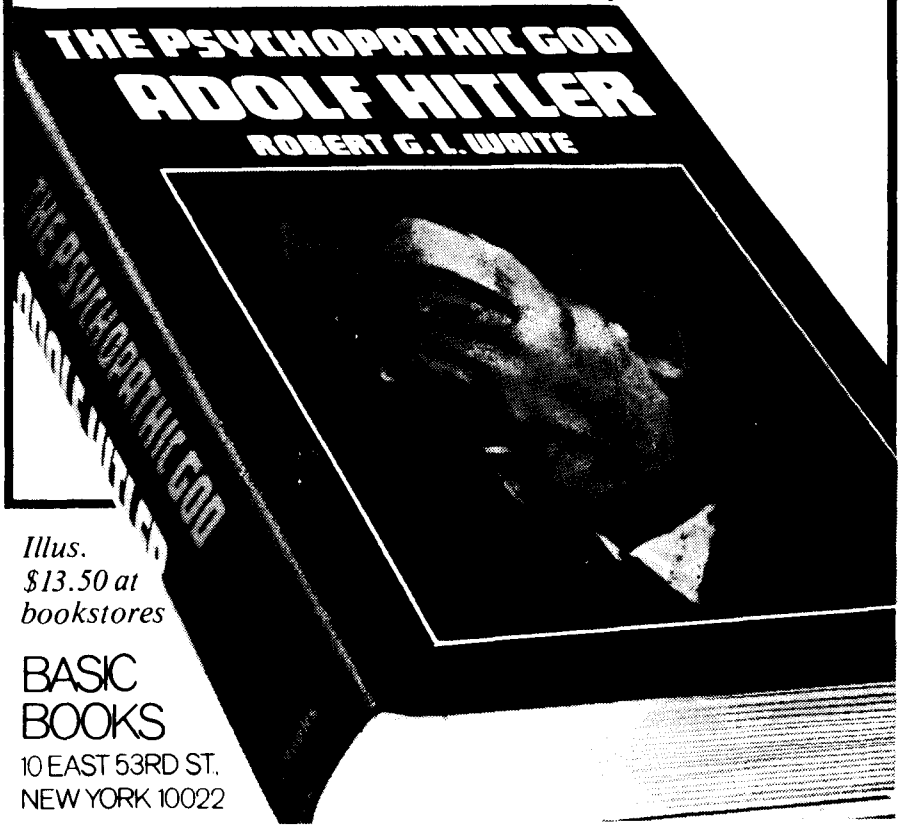


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modern society, the old alliance of the top and the bottom against the middle. Unlike guilty middle-class intellectuals like George Orwell (who tried to adopt a working-class accent), Unity (and Jessica) could form friendships with the lower class without sacrificing one scrap of their own upper-class individuality. Hitler, indeed, gloried in Unity's aristocratic aura, which he regarded as a great asset to his circle, though it probably prevented any overt sexual relationship between them, since as one of Mr. Pryce-Jones's interviewees put it, "Hitler only felt comfortable with someone of his own class, such as Eva Braun."

How, then, is one to regard Unity Mitford? As an upper-class madcap, seeking an outlet for her bubbling arrogance and self-importance in a world she did not understand? As a butterfly of an almost extinct species, burned in the candle flame of greedily sought publicity? One might be content with such characterizations, were it not for one thing: the major disturbance caused by David Pryce-Jones's book. This suggests that Unity Mitford is, after all, a figure of some significance in the study of English social life, and especially its upper class, which, though in decline, still has a certain part to play.

The row was many-sided, and involved many different people with different points to make. Sir Oswald Mosley himself made a visit of some weeks to London from his retreat in Orsay, France, in order to direct operations against Pryce-Jones. His attempts to prevent the publication of the book failed, but Pryce-Jones did agree to some minor adjustments of the text. The campaign against the book continued, however, and culminated in a television confrontation between Mosley and Pryce-Jones.

The chief points at issue in this exchange were these:

1. Did Pryce-Jones misreport his interviewees, so presenting a distorted picture of Unity, who was really a very lovable person, though the victim of a tragic delusion?

2. Was it cruel to write about Unity at all, in view of the distress this would cause to her surviving family? Would it not have been better to have left her alone as a topic of some pathos but no significance?

3. Did Pryce-Jones misrepresent Sir Oswald Mosley and his movement as anti-Semitic, when in fact Mosley had only opposed some Jews who had used their influence to drag England into war with Germany?

4. Specifically, did Pryce-Jones misquote a telegram sent by Mosley to Streicher, thus making the message appear an expression of discipleship to Nazism instead of a formal message of thanks?

On the apparently damaging charge that Pryce-Jones had falsified his interviews, he was definitively cleared by a competent and detailed investigation carried out by the "Insight" team of the *Sunday Times*, who presented one of their well-known reports. This report showed that Pryce-Jones's interviews, as published, were in accordance with the notes he made at the time of the interviews; that he had submitted the written-up interviews to all his interviewees for criticism or comment, and had incorporated any objections in the final version; and that the present retractions of some of the interviewees were made on vague or questionable grounds (for example, one interviewee said, "If I had known that Pryce-Jones was a Jew [actually he is half-Jewish], I wouldn't have given him an interview").

On the question of Mosley's telegram to Streicher, a long correspondence took place in the columns of several periodicals. Mosley's main point was that Pryce-Jones had misquoted the telegram as thanking Streicher for his "advice," while in fact it had only thanked Streicher for his "message." To this Pryce-Jones replied that some sources did indeed support the word "advice," but that in any case the telegram as a whole, with or without the word "advice," goes far beyond a formal acknowledgment, and is an unequivocal endorsement of Nazism and anti-Semitism. The reader may judge for himself from the text of the telegram:

> To Herr Streicher. The *Stuermer*. Nuremberg. Please accept my very best thanks for your kind telegram which greeted my speech in Leicester. It was received while I was away from London. I value your advice [message] greatly in the midst of our hard struggle. The power of Jewish corruption must be destroyed in all countries before peace and justice can be successfully achieved in Europe. Our struggle to this end is hard, but our victory is certain.

It is little wonder that Mosley did his best to counteract the effect of Pryce-Jones's citation of this telegram, for it was most damaging to Mosley's attempted comeback to respectability, which up to this point, with the aid of Robert Skidelsky's whitewashing biography which appeared in 1975, was proving quite successful. Alastair Forbes, whose own review of Pryce-Jones's book in the *Times Literary Supplement* was unfavorable, nevertheless wrote about Mosley's defense of his telegram:

> I regarded it then as now "shameful" for any Englishman to send any gratuitous communication whatsoever, *a fortiori* one so sycophantic and racist as Mosley's toadying telegram, to the Jew-baiting criminal Streicher, and I was sorry to see him contriving to secure in the media so much free publicity for himself out of the publication of Mr. Pryce-Jones's really not very significant book about the poor, silly young sister-in-law whom he so ruthlessly dismissed in his television chat with the author. . . .

Here we find the not uncommon attitude of condemning Mosley while at the same time dismissing the importance of Unity Mitford.

Mosley himself, despite his long exile from British politics, cannot be regarded as an insignificant figure, and Pryce-Jones's exposé is therefore most opportune. Fascism is beginning to raise its head again in Britain, in the form of the National Front, the successor movement to Mosley's more explicitly-named British Union of Fascists. Though the National Front is at present directing its racist propaganda more against colored immigrants than against Jews for tactical reasons, its anti-Semitism is by no means dormant. For example, it is associated with the publication of a

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pamphlet and a book about the "myth" or "hoax" of the Holocaust, arguing that the massacre of six million Jews never took place.

While the movement is still very small, its voting figures in recent local elections and by-elections for Parliament have shown a disturbing increase. Mosley's own ceaseless propaganda for the myth that the war against Germany was waged on behalf of the Jews and not for British interests may be laying the seeds of mischief. He pretends, for example, that the physical clashes which took place in the 30's between his followers and the Jews of the East End of London were the result of unprovoked aggression on the part of the Jews. In his television encounter with Pryce-Jones, Mosley disclaimed anti-Semitism, while at the same time asserting the myth of "Jewish power" influential enough to bring about a world war. In addition, Mosley's wife Diana, who, as Diana Mitford, shared Unity's enthusiasm for Hitler, has just published her own book of autobiography, in which she argues that the Jews were partly to blame for the Holocaust, since they should have arranged an exodus of Jews from Europe before the war. This not only ignores the fact that no country was willing to receive Jews in any numbers, but assumes the vast power, wealth, and influence of "world Jewry," which alone could have made such an operation possible. Such impudent pronouncements as those of Mosley and his wife have served, it is to be hoped, to destroy their pretensions to respectability.

If nothing else, then, it was worthwhile to raise the question of Unity Mitford, if only to bring out into the open the hypocrisies of the Mosleys and forestall their attempts to creep back into decent public life. Yet the final question remains whether Unity herself was a figure of any significance, or just an unbalanced girl best left to rest in her grave.

The clue that disposes one to think that Unity is after all a figure of some significance is the defensive, almost hysterical, tone of those who took the line that she was not. This seemed to indicate that the exposure of Unity had touched a raw nerve. If Pryce-Jones's book was so trivial, why did they get so upset? The conclusion presented itself that Unity was in some way representative of the English upper class. Her anti-Semitism, though bizarre in its manner of expression, was a faithful image of upper-class anti-Semitism, even though its faithfulness was that of a caricature, which by exaggeration brings out the essential features.

Perhaps the most startling example of the defensive, hysterical reaction was the review by Lord Lambton, published in the *Spectator*. Lord Lambton argued that it was disgraceful to disinter the story of "a reckless young girl," thus needlessly distressing her family. He then attacked the publisher of the book, Lord Weidenfeld:

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> . . . his full-time occupation of genuflecting and sycophanting to every notable, and visiting notable, in England, swirling daily through the drawing rooms of London in a series of *palais glides*, whispering obsequiously, leaves him breathless for such a mundane task [as reading]. Rather does he deal with books as a butcher with joints of meat: his sole consideration the clearance of his stocks.

For anyone familiar with anti-Semitic treatments of society Jews in the English novel, this description is full of echoes. Lord Lambton attempted to counteract this impression by giving a tribute to what he called "the Jewish establishment" and its "dignity and moderation" in the face of the "terrible sufferings" of "the Jewish race" in the last war—a "dignity and moderation," which, he declared, had been betrayed by Lord Weidenfeld's action in publishing Pryce-Jones's book. Here is a passionate reaction indeed to what Lord Lambton called a "shoddy, inaccurate, dull little book." And the "Jewish establishment" to which Lord Lambton refers so respectfully sounds a little too reminiscent of the Elders of Zion. Who are these "dignified and moderate" members of the "Jewish establishment"?

One commentator who did not take the prevailing attitude that Unity Mitford was a person of minimal importance was C. P. Snow, who recalled in the *Financial Times* that, in the 30's, her much-publicized activities had not seemed at all trivial. "Far too many people of some significance were drifting 'round the Unity Mitford-Munich-Nuremberg circuit," he wrote. And, Lord Snow commented, if Hitler had won, the role of these people in postwar England is not hard to guess.

And in fact, too much of the evidence provided by Pryce-Jones shows that Unity Mitford was not quite so freakish and unrepresentative as she has been made out to be. In the copy of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* belonging to the Mitford family, Pryce-Jones found marginal comments made by Lady Redesdale (the lovable "Muv"): "Too true!" "I always said so!" A previous Lord Redesdale, Unity's grandfather, had been the great friend and supporter of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the anti-Semitic theorist who was the official philosopher of Nazism. Unity's other grandfather, Commander Bowles, was also an anti-Semitic author. In a travel book he jeered at the Jews at the Wailing Wall: "I don't see what the Jews have got to wail about. If they have been expelled from Jerusalem, they are the rulers of London, Paris, and Berlin. If they are no longer governors of Palestine, they are the tyrants of Europe." Is it possible to state with confidence that if the notebooks, diaries, and publications of other aristocratic families were to be examined with the same care that Pryce-Jones has devoted to the Mitfords, a very different picture would emerge?

When Unity embraced the doctrine of a worldwide conspiracy by the Jews against humanity, then, it was no alien, foreign doctrine she was espousing, but part of the air she breathed. True, there was something eccentric about the flamboyance of her allegiance to anti-Semitism. There was an element of play-acting about it, a childish desire to take sides and have the excitement of being a partisan. The Nazi salutes, the swastika necklace, the gauntlets, boots, and black shirt—all these were un-English and vulgar, and adopted mainly to shock her relations. But the basic ideas were so commonplace that the chief objection of other upper-class Englishmen might have been that Unity was bringing serious ideas into contempt by her unladylike behavior. There were many at that time who believed quite seriously in the Elders of Zion and their plot to take over the world—it was only Hitler's methods, which they saw as crude and unlikely to succeed, with which they disagreed, preferring instead the old aristocratic arts of negotiation, wheedling, and concession, as well as the occasional judicious use of violence.

It is these people Mr. Pryce-Jones is telling us about in his excellent study, in which he approaches his subject in the spirit of a dedicated field-working anthropologist. His book is not just about Unity Mitford. It is about the class to which she belonged, and that is why it aroused such passions.

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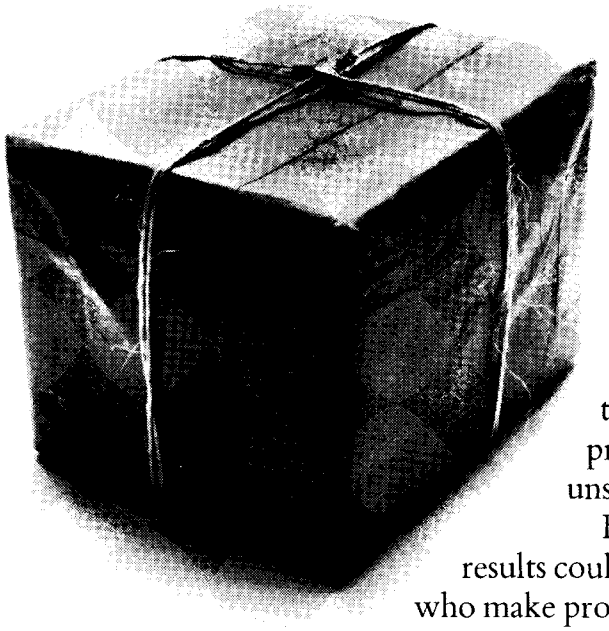

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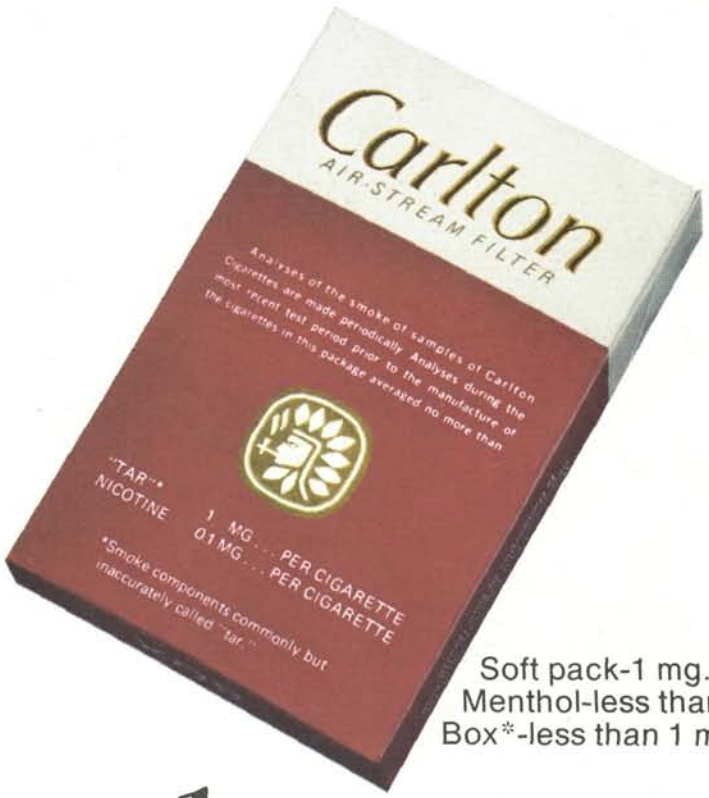
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